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Women Are from Venus



ANCIENT SECRET OF THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH™



BOOK

2

A companion to the book by

PETER KELDER

Foreword by

BERNIE S. SIEGEL, M.D.

ANCIENT SECRET OF THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH, BOOK 2

Peter Kelder



Doubleday

ANCIENT SECRET
of the
FOUNTAIN
of
YOUTH



B O O K 2



D O U B L E D A Y

New York

London

Toronto

Sydney

Auckland

To Peter Kelder

*on behalf of those who have
gratefully received this gift*



C O N T E N T S

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F O R E W O R D

In this volume, you will be introduced to ideas, techniques, and wisdom that can empower you, enhance your health, increase your joy of living, and cause you to live longer.

However, you won't notice that you're living longer.

You'll be too busy enjoying life and living it fully.

I often see people start to live their lives to the fullest only after they develop a life-threatening illness and must come to grips with their own mortality.

When this happens, they experience a spiritual and physical rebirth so powerful it can improve or even cure the illness completely.

Once this renewal process takes over, aging ends and youthing begins.

Please, don't wait until you're facing death to set the youthing process in motion in your life.

Begin it now.

This book is intended to help you do just that.

In it, you'll discover a wonderful series of simple exercises called the Five Rites.

You will also find a wealth of related information on diet, breathing, voice energetics, and many other topics.

You will read about the uplifting experiences of people who practice the Five Rites.

And you'll find advice and insights from physicians who will share their knowledge with you.

But as you read the pages that follow, keep in mind that this book is not really about ritual, or exercise, or techniques.

At its heart, it is about you—your uniqueness, your attitudes and beliefs, your desires and hopes, your potential, your ability to joyfully embrace life and live it fully.

Science has demonstrated that your body and brain are physically altered by both your activities and your thoughts.

By the same token, you can purposefully alter your activities and thoughts to achieve your goals for change.

The exercises and techniques in this book are aimed at this very thing.

I have done the Five Rites, and they make a lot of sense to me.

I am convinced that if you do them regularly, and if you engage in life joyfully, you will improve your physical health and your mental outlook, and you will begin the youthening process.

Also, you will access and put to use the life force energy which is the essence of all things.

Science now has the ability to measure this energy and is beginning to explore it.

I have experimented with this book's advice on mantras and mantrums, and I can feel the energy difference they make.

Allow me to share this story:

The other night I was meditating and performing my mantras while lying in bed.

My cats were in bed with me, curling up to go to sleep.

My wife, who was in the other room, could feel an unusual energy, and she came in to see what was happening.

When she entered, I opened my eyes and discovered that the cats had also sensed something unusual.

They were sitting upright, as alert and wide awake as I have ever seen them at 11 p.m..

To me, the incident demonstrated how real and palpable this energy is and how it can make things happen in your life, things that are sensed and perceived by those around us.

My advice to you is this: Take the valuable information you are about to read.

Bring to it your own insights and inspiration.

Then, create your own personal transformation.

Remember,

you will not find the fountain of youth by looking outside yourself.

The source of all things is found by going within.

So start right now!

Peace,

Bernie S. Siegel, M.D.

P U B L I S H E R ' S

I N T R O D U C T I O N

When the last key had made its imprint, he pushed back from his typewriter, made a neat pile of the pages he had written, and gazed with mixed satisfaction and uncertainty at the title page which read, “*The Eye of Revelation* by Peter Kelder.”

The manuscript which Kelder held in his hands was not a major literary feat. But it was well crafted, short, simple, and direct. Moreover, it conveyed a message which many have since found meaningful and even profound. Even so, Kelder could not have imagined then, in 1939, that his little book would endure for generations, to be read by millions of people throughout the world in a dozen languages and even in braille.

His book told the story of five ancient Tibetan exercises brought to the West by a retired British Army officer identified only as Colonel Bradford. The Five Rites, as they were called, were said to unlock the secret of nothing less than the fabled fountain of youth.

Kelder’s book was published soon thereafter, and while it was not a best-seller, it was popular enough to be expanded and reissued eight years later in 1947. Even when it did eventually go out of print, it showed surprising staying power. Kelder’s book survived by word-of-mouth as copies were passed from hand to hand, and in time it gained the status of a cult classic.

Then, in 1985 Kelder updated his book and it was republished by Harbor Press under the title *Ancient Secret of the Fountain of Youth*. By then, more than half a century had elapsed since the book initially appeared, and the world was a very different place. Western culture, coming to terms with a new age of technology, had begun to search for answers in the ancient wisdom of the East. Eastern mysticism, the concept of subtle energy, the practice of yoga, and the belief that these things interacted with health and physical aging, were no longer the odd concepts of a lunatic fringe. They had become fixtures of Western popular culture.

Destiny had finally caught up with Peter Kelder’s small book. Promoted only by word-of-mouth, it caught on, slowly at first, and then with gathering momentum. Within ten years *Ancient Secret of the Fountain of Youth* became an international publishing phenomenon. In the U.S., it outsold many *New York Times* best-sellers. In Germany, Austria, and Switzerland the book became virtually a national institution. It remains on

the German language best-seller lists today, a decade after it was first published. And two dozen foreign language editions have spread the popularity of Kelder's book throughout the world.

Of course, Peter Kelder's book could not have enjoyed such huge success if it had not made good on its fundamental promise: to help the reader achieve renewed youth, health, and vitality. Certainly that conclusion is supported by the deluge of mail readers have sent to the publisher for more than ten years. Their letters tell how the Five Rites have benefited them in ways ranging from modest to miraculous.

Aside from passing on their stories of personal success, letters from readers have frequently asked two things. First, they want more detailed information on a variety of topics discussed fleetingly in Kelder's brief original volume. Second, they want to know more about the book's mysterious author, not to mention his leading character, the elusive Colonel Bradford.

The book you now hold in your hands has been written in response to the first of these inquiries. *Ancient Secret of the Fountain of Youth, Book 2* contains a wealth of information which picks up where Kelder's original (now renamed *Ancient Secret of the Fountain of Youth, Book 1*) leaves off. Each chapter of the book is written by an expert on the topic at hand.

[Chapter One](#) summarizes the story of Colonel Bradford and his Tibetan expedition for those unfamiliar with *Book 1*.

[Chapter Two](#) looks to the historical record to answer the question, Was Colonel Bradford's far-fetched tale of Tibet fact or fiction? Either way, it concludes, Bradford's story could well have happened, for numerous, well-documented accounts brought back by early Tibetan travelers record magic and mystery no less incredible than that witnessed by Bradford.

[Chapter Three](#) validates the Five Rites through remarkable, real-life stories told by people who have benefited from them.

[Chapter Four](#) probes the energy secrets of the Five Rites in an attempt to answer the question, What enables these simple exercises to perform their magic?

[Chapter Five](#) looks at the Five Rites from the perspective of a medical doctor who is also a yoga expert. It discusses the exercises in detail and supplements them with an abundance of helpful advice.

[Chapters Six](#) and [Seven](#) discuss two topics briefly visited in *Book 1*: the health benefits of proper diet and food combining, and the energetics of the voice, sound, and meditation.

Chapter Eight concludes with insights from one of the world's foremost Tibetan scholars. Dr. Robert Thurman gives an overview of the Five Rites *vis-à-vis* Tibet's history and culture.

And now for the second topic which readers have inquired about: Kelder and Bradford. For years readers have written the publisher with questions about these two, whom, they assume, are no longer living. This is something which amuses Kelder, for yes, he is alive and well today more than half a century after the publication of his book. I am pleased to report that I personally know him and count him as a close and trusted friend, though there are many things I do not know about him.

Unfortunately, most must remain just that, for Kelder is determined not to disturb the veil of mystery that intrigues me and so many others. He is an intensely private and unassuming man who believes that the words he has written speak for themselves. And he maintains that extraneous issues concerning himself and Bradford can serve only to distract from the validity of the simple, straightforward message which he has put before the world.

To be sure, I have no wish to intrude upon Kelder's privacy. Yet I do understand the desire of readers to feel more closely connected to a man whose words have so greatly influenced, even transformed their lives. So, I trust he will forgive me if I do now for the first time select a few details about his life and pass them on to the reader.

Kelder was raised by loving, adoptive Dutch parents in the midwestern United States, and while still a teenager, he left home with their consent to undertake life's challenges. Later, Kelder, like Colonel Bradford, "traveled to virtually every corner of the globe" as an officer in the merchant marine. He became a polished, articulate, and learned man conversant in many languages, and throughout his life he maintained a love of books and libraries, words and poetry.

On a memorable spring morning not so long ago, Kelder accompanied me on a driving tour of the area where he lived and worked when he wrote *The Eye of Revelation* in the late 1930s, North Hollywood and the Hollywood Hills in Southern California. No, Kelder was not a movie screenplay writer, but he did work for a time as a researcher at one of the major Hollywood studios. Surprisingly, many of the landmarks he remembers from those days are still intact, including the house where he lived, perched high atop the Hollywood Hills overlooking Los Angeles and the Pacific Ocean, a stone's throw from the home of movie legend Errol Flynn. Today the modest structure is surrounded by the homes of movieland's rich and famous.

Kelder asserts that Colonel Bradford was a very real individual whom he did encounter in the greater Los Angeles area at that period of his life, though "Bradford"

was a pseudonym. Little more than that is forthcoming.

But just as intriguing as Kelder or Bradford is another man whom few know anything about. He is Harry J. Gardener, the man who published *The Eye of Revelation* in 1939 under the imprint of the small publishing company he operated, The Midday Press. Apparently, it was Gardener who first met Bradford, introduced him to Kelder, and asked Kelder to write a book about Bradford's Tibetan adventures.

Kelder is sketchy, at best, when it comes to details on the relationship among the three. Suffice it to say that he and Gardener became lifelong friends who maintained contact with one another until Gardener's death in the 1970s. Bradford, on the other hand, came into their lives and then departed, never to be seen again, much as he did in Kelder's written chronicle.

I suspect, though it is purely conjecture on my part, that though Peter Kelder wrote *The Eye of Revelation* in the first person, he was not the man who befriended the Colonel before his expedition to Tibet and who learned first-hand about the Five Rites upon the Colonel's return. That distinction, I suspect, belongs to Harry Gardener who probably asked Kelder, a capable writer, to draft the story for him, Gardener remaining nameless and Kelder assuming his role. Today, almost 60 years after the fact, it's impossible for even Kelder himself to say just how much of the information in the book was gained through direct contact with Colonel Bradford and how much was gained second-hand from Harry Gardener. It's equally unclear what embellishments, if any, Kelder added to the story.

These lingering issues will never be fully resolved. But does that really matter? As Kelder asserts, they are nothing more than intriguing loose threads which do not weaken the integrity of the garment as a whole. The important questions are, Does his book give something of value to its readers; Does it make a worthwhile contribution to their lives?

I hope the following chapters will help you discover that it does. You must supply the final answer.

Harry R. Lynn
Publisher



The story could have been concocted in the head of an overly imaginative Hollywood screen writer. It is that preposterous. At the same time, it is engaging, appealing, and it speaks words of wisdom that seem to resonate with something deep inside.

More than two million people around the world have experienced this curious mix of reactions upon reading *Ancient Secret of the Fountain of Youth, Book 1*, the short volume which precedes the one you are reading now.

As its title suggests, the book's message is one of compelling concern to just about everyone over the age of 40. It tells how to arrest and reverse the aging process, how to achieve the health and vitality of unending youth.

The synopsis that follows is offered for those who have not read Kelder's book. It, together with the chapters that follow, will give you all of the pertinent information contained in *Book 1* and much more. Therefore, it is not essential for you to read it, but it is highly recommended that you do so. In Kelder's book you'll find inspiration and magic that can't be duplicated here. Many people who read the book cherish the experience and return to reread it again and again. It's something you shouldn't miss.

The book's story begins one afternoon when author Peter Kelder is relaxing on a park bench, going through the afternoon paper. Before long, an elderly gentleman seats himself next to Kelder and engages him in conversation.

The old man introduces himself as Colonel Bradford, a retired British Army officer who also served in the diplomatic corps for the Crown. His career has taken him to the far corners of the globe, and Colonel Bradford regales Kelder with tales of his adventures.

When the two part, they agree to meet again. Before long, they are seeing one another regularly, and a close friendship develops.

One evening when they are together the Colonel announces a startling decision he has made. When he was stationed in India some years previously he had heard a curious and unforgettable story. It concerned the lamas of a particular monastery somewhere in the remote wilderness of the Tibetan Himalayas. In that monastery, ancient wisdom handed down for thousands of years promised a solution to one of the world's great mysteries. According to legend, the lamas of the monastery were heirs to nothing less than the secret of the fountain of youth.

Like so many other men, Colonel Bradford had become old at the age of 40, and since then he had not been growing any younger. The more he heard of this miraculous fountain of youth, the more he became convinced that such a place actually existed. He began to gather information on directions, the character of the country, the climate, and other data that might help him locate the spot. And once his investigation had begun, the Colonel became increasingly obsessed with a desire to find this fountain of youth.

The desire, he told me, had become so irresistible, he had decided to return to India and search in earnest for this retreat and its secret of lasting youth. And

Colonel Bradford asked me if I would join with him in the effort.

Should he go with Colonel Bradford? Kelder agonizes over the decision, but finally sides with skepticism, reluctantly declining to go.

Yet in the back of my mind the haunting possibility remained: a fountain of youth. What a thrilling idea! For his sake, I hoped that the Colonel might find it.

Colonel Bradford sets out on his mission alone. Then, years pass without word from him. In fact Kelder has nearly forgotten his erstwhile companion and notions of a Tibetan Shangri-La when one day a letter arrives announcing that the Colonel has achieved his goal and will shortly return.

Soon thereafter, when the two are reunited, Kelder is witness to an astonishing transformation. Amazingly, Bradford looks, “as the Colonel might have looked years ago in the prime of his life. Instead of a stooping, sallow old man with a cane, I saw a tall, straight figure. His face was robust, and he had a thick growth of dark hair with scarcely a trace of gray.”

Colonel Bradford proceeds to tell his very excited friend all that has happened during his extended absence. He tells of years of struggle and effort finally rewarded with success—the discovery of a remote Tibetan monastery whose occupants never grow old.

In the monastery, older men and women were nowhere to be seen. The lamas good-naturedly referred to the Colonel as “The Ancient One,” for it had been a very long time since they had seen anyone who looked as old as he. To them, he was a most novel sight.

“For the first two weeks after I arrived,” said the Colonel, “I was like a fish out of water. I marveled at everything I saw, and at times could hardly believe what was before my eyes. Soon, my health began to improve. I was able to sleep soundly at night, and every morning I awoke feeling more and more refreshed and energetic. Before long, I found that I needed my cane only when hiking in the mountains.”

Then, one morning the Colonel stumbles onto a mirror, and for the first time in two years he sees his reflection. To his utter disbelief and amazement, the image before his eyes is that of a much younger man. The Colonel realizes that he has undergone a physical transformation: he appears to be at least 15 years younger than he was the day he arrived.

“Words cannot describe the joy and elation which I felt. In the weeks and months ahead, my appearance continued to improve, and the change became increasingly apparent to all who knew me. Before long, my honorary title, ‘The Ancient One,’ was heard no more.”

Then, Colonel Bradford proceeds to explain exactly how he achieved this remarkable feat of rejuvenation.

“The first important thing I was taught after entering the monastery,” said the Colonel, “was this: the body has seven energy centers which in English could be called vortexes. The Hindus call them chakras. They are powerful electrical fields, invisible to the eye, but quite real nonetheless. These seven vortexes govern the seven ductless glands in the body’s endocrine system, and the endocrine glands, in turn, regulate all of the body’s functions, including the process of aging...”

“In a healthy body, each of these vortexes revolves at great speed, permitting vital life energy, also called prana or etheric energy, to flow upward through the endocrine system. But if one or more of these vortexes begins to slow down, the flow of vital life energy is inhibited or blocked, and—well, that’s just another name for aging and ill health.

“... The quickest way to regain youth, health, and vitality is to start these energy centers spinning normally again. There are five simple exercises that will accomplish this. Any one of them alone is helpful, but all five are required to get best results. These five exercises are not really exercises at all. The lamas call them rites, and so that is how I shall refer to them, too.”

That said, the Colonel describes and demonstrates for Kelder five yogic exercises which he calls “the Five Rites.” He tells Kelder to begin performing each rite three times daily, then to gradually increase

repetitions until he is performing each rite 21 times a day.

Later, he explains that benefits from the rites will be more pronounced for those who practice celibacy. While he cautions that celibacy is not a realistic goal for most people, he offers a sixth rite which will be helpful to those who are up to the challenge.

In [Chapter Five](#) of this book, all six rites are described and discussed in detail. The chapter also offers advice which will be helpful to those who experience difficulty performing any of the rites, and guidelines which will help everyone perform the exercises effectively and safely.

Once Bradford has revealed the Five Rites, Kelder enthusiastically begins to experiment with them. Within three months he experiences impressive results. He is eager to share the news of Colonel Bradford's discovery with others and asks the Colonel if he will lead a class. The Colonel agrees, and the small study group which results is dubbed "the Himalaya Club." The group meets regularly to practice the Five Rites and discuss related matters such as diet and nutrition (see [Chapters One](#) and [Six](#)). Sure enough, the members of the club—all over the age of 50—are within short order benefiting from the Five Rites' rejuvenative powers.

Since the modest inauguration of Colonel Bradford's first Himalaya Club, readers of Kelder's book have carried the torch forward, organizing their own groups and classes and often borrowing the name Himalaya Club. In this manner countless people in nations around the world have participated in Bradford's fountain of youth discovery. For further information about starting your own Himalaya Club, see [Appendix A](#) at the end of the book.

In the final pages of Kelder's book, Colonel Bradford speaks to gatherings of the original Himalaya Club on two subjects related to health and the Five Rites:

The first subject is diet. Bradford argues for the importance of limiting the number and the combination of foods eaten at each meal.

The second subject is voice. The Colonel discusses the energetics of the human voice, and their relationship to the Five Rites.

In this book, [Chapter Six](#), “Food Combining and Other Dietary Advice,” and [Chapter Seven](#), “Energetics of the Voice, Sound, and Meditation,” explore both subjects in detail. Each chapter will give specific advice, and each will be of interest and value to anyone who has found Colonel Bradford’s summary comments intriguing.

In the end, Colonel Bradford says good-bye to the members of the Himalaya Club as he sets off on a mission to spread news of the Five Rites to others.

“It has been most gratifying to see each of you improve from day to day,” concludes the Colonel. “I have taught you all that I can for the present. But as the Five Rites continue to do their work, they will open doors to further learning and progress in the future. In the meantime, there are others who need the information which I have taught you, and it is time for me to be on my way to them.”

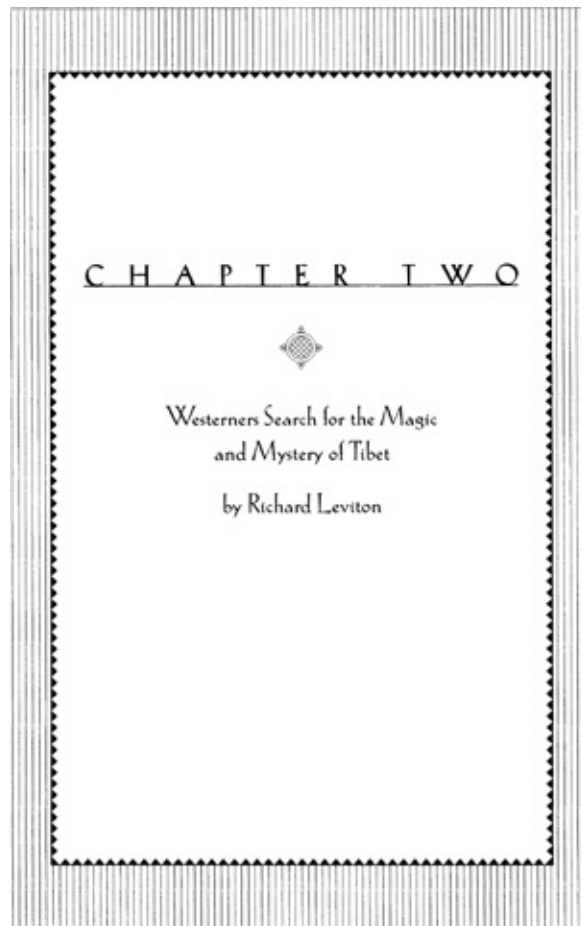
At this, the Colonel bade us all farewell. This extraordinary man had earned a very special place in our hearts, and so of course we were sorry to see him go. But we were also glad to know that before long others would be sharing the priceless information he had so generously shared with us. We considered ourselves fortunate, indeed. For in all of history, few have been privileged to learn the ancient secret of the fountain of youth.

Peter Kelder tells us that he has used a pseudonym for his book’s leading character. But what about the rest of his story? Should we believe it? Is it fact or fiction? Have other Western travelers to Tibet returned with such remarkable tales?

In the 1920s and ’30s, before Kelder’s book was written, was it possible to penetrate the wall of secrecy and the physical barriers that isolated “Forbidden Tibet” from the rest of the world, to travel into “the Land of Snows” in search of hidden settlements and arcane mystical secrets? Could it be true that somewhere in the shadow of the world’s tallest mountains there existed a Shangri-La where ageless men and women lived in Utopian splendor?

We now turn to these questions.

Harry Lynn is the publisher of Harbor Press .



“The most stupendous upheaval to be found on the face of our planet” is how an early 20th century traveler described the mysterious and enigmatic mountain kingdom of Tibet.

Roughly the size of Western Europe, the Tibetan plateau stands three miles above sea level in the heart of Central Asia, surrounded and guarded by the tallest mountains on Earth.

Its only doorways are treacherous mountain passes which soar upward to 20,000 feet.

Until the Chinese invasions in the 1950s, Tibet was almost completely isolated from the rest of the world, primarily because of this formidable topography.

But like Colonel Bradford, in the early decades of this century a few

intrepid travelers did attempt to penetrate the barriers that guarded Tibet and experience firsthand the surprises that lay within.

Many failed or died in the attempt.

But some succeeded, and when they returned to the outside world they brought with them stories of a land of magic and mystery.

They told of supernaturally-empowered lamas, flying mystics, living Methuselabs and death-defying, miracle-performing sages.

Even as late as 1950 Lowell Thomas, Jr., the well-known American adventurer, in writing of his recent trip to the “sealed and silent land” of Tibet, said, “The mysterious mountain kingdom beyond the towering Himalayas on the very roof of the world has long been the number one El Dorado for explorers and travelers with a keen appetite for the unknown.”



Monks at Palkhor Chode Monastery, Gyantse (c. 1930)

Early Western travelers to Tibet discovered an intensely spiritual culture where fully one-quarter of the male population studied in monastic universities called

gonpas.

Pictured here is one of the methods of instruction, a form of highly animated debate.

Those travelers who surmounted the physical obstacles to gain entry into Tibet found themselves in an intensely spiritual culture.

Before the invading Chinese destroyed its monastic system, Tibet had more than 6,000 Buddhist monasteries, well over 600,000 monks, and 4,000 lamas.

Fully one-quarter of the male population studied in spiritual universities called

gonpas that housed massive libraries containing ancient and irreplaceable handwritten manuscripts.

Travelers to Tibet also found themselves in a closed society that did not welcome outsiders.

As Peter Hopkirk writes in

Trespassers on the Roof of the World, beginning in the 1860s “a succession of trespassers—including mystics, plant-hunters, explorers, and pure adventurers —now began to cross illegally into Tibet.”

Some sought to plunder the assumed riches of a land whose capital, Lhasa, was called “The Forbidden City.”

Others wished to advance their reputations as adventurers.

In these goals, few succeeded.

But others who genuinely sought spiritual illumination fared better.

One of the first such travelers to enter Tibet was Evariste Huc, a Roman Catholic missionary from France who in 1846 reported on his experiences in the monastery of Kounboun.

Europeans read with astonishment his accounts of miraculous happenings, such as lamas effortlessly traveling great distances in bodies seemingly made of mist and dream.

Living Among the Great Ones

Rumors of such magic drew a Russian woman named Helena P. Blavatsky (1831-1891) into Tibet beginning around 1857.

She would spend, on and off, seven years there living and studying with high spiritual masters.

She called them

Mahatmas (Great Ones), "the perfect ones or accomplished ones," and saw them as possessing some of the oldest and possibly purest wisdom teachings in the world.

Actual travel details of Blavatsky's journeys are sketchy; her own accounts emphasize the teachings she gathered.

However, it's believed that she journeyed on horseback or by yak through Tibet in search of "the highest knowledge and power."

After she returned to Europe, and during the time she lived in America, Blavatsky claimed to be in continuing contact with Tibetan spiritual masters.

She said they often appeared before her in her New York City apartment, spoke with her, dictated new passages for her books, and demonstrated esoteric principles.

Few who met Blavatsky doubted that she was a clairvoyant of exceptional abilities, and her command of esoteric knowledge persuaded many that her claims of contact with the Himalayan masters must surely be true.

Others who later followed in Blavatsky's footsteps, Colonel Bradford presumably among them, are indebted to her for blazing a trail to the East upon which later generations could travel.

As early as the 1860s Blavatsky showed the West that spiritual wonders and extraordinary teachings were to be found in Tibet.

Scientists Witness Tibetan "Miracles"

For the skeptical among us, there is much more documentation of Tibet's spiritual wonders in the writings of Baird T. Spalding (1858-1953), a university-trained scientist who organized a research expedition to Tibet beginning in 1894.

It included eleven scientifically-minded people, and its goal was to study the great Himalayan masters, their feats, and their wisdom.



Helena P. Blavatsky (1831-1891)

Beginning around 1857 Madame Blavatsky journeyed through Tibet in search of “the highest knowledge and power.”

What she learned at the hands of high Tibetan spiritual masters formed the core of the Theosophical movement, which she founded in the late 19th century.

Photograph of portrait by Herman Schmiechen.

Courtesy of the Theosophical Society in America, Wheaton, Illinois.

The members of the expedition were not disappointed.

According to Spalding, he and his fellow travelers witnessed miracles of overcoming death, thought transference and telepathy, levitation, flying

through the air, walking through fire, and walking on water.

For a group of practical scientists trained to take nothing for granted until it is fully verified, the experience was eye-opening.

“We went thoroughly skeptical and came away thoroughly convinced and converted,” Spalding wrote.

Among Spalding’s remarkable discoveries was the existence of men and women who said they were hundreds of years old.

Spalding claimed that many of them were over 500 years old, and they had records to prove it.

One day he and his company had breakfast with four extraordinary men.

One said he was a thousand years old, yet his body was as buoyant and supple as that of a man of 35.

The man next to him claimed he was 700 years old, and he had the body of a vigorous 40-year-old.

Spalding’s guide, a master named Emil, claimed he was 500 years old, and another master called Jast said he was about the same age as Emil.

Others in Emil’s unusual family included a nephew, age 115, and a niece, 128, both as sprightly as if they were in their thirties.

Emil’s mother was said to be 700 years old.

All of these centenarians were as nimble and light-hearted as though they had been 20, Spalding wrote.

What was their secret?

They had learned how to achieve extraordinary longevity by “perfecting” the body.

Perfecting the body means so mastering its biochemical elements that you can dissolve it and recreate it as you wish.

You can change your body of flesh and bone into a body more like mist and dream and travel in it effortlessly on your spiritual journeys to the higher planes.

Physical death ceases to have any meaning or reality when seen in the light of this accomplishment.

Surely this is astounding, yet the Tibetan masters told Spalding that this

feat ought not to be regarded as exceptional.

Each of us is given a spiritually perfect body that is capable of living many centuries, explained Emil.

These people have merely learned how to restore their bodies to that pristine state.



Baird T. Spalding (1858-1953)

A university-trained scientist, Spalding organized a research expedition to Tibet in 1894.

He returned with reports of miraculous feats of longevity, levitation, flying through the air, and walking on water.

Baird T. Spalding, author of Life & Teaching of the Masters of the Far East,

Devorss Publications, Venice, California.

At least something of this Tibetan ability to live for a very long time must have rubbed off on Spalding, for he lived to be 95.

According to a close friend, he had almost unlimited energy, was almost never fatigued, and could survive on four hours of sleep a night for weeks on end.

He maintained that high vitality up until the end of his long life.

Had he perhaps found a fountain of youth?

Tibetan Secrets Are Revealed to the West

Among the first Westerners ever to travel through Tibet was the French Buddhist scholar, Alexandra David-Neel (1868-1969).

A pioneer feminist almost a century ahead of her time, she holds the honor of being the first Western woman to set foot in Lhasa (at age 54) and to be officially received by a Dalai Lama.

Because traveling in Tibet was so dangerous, David-Neel and a Tibetan lama companion had to disguise themselves as naljorpas, or beggar-pilgrims.

It was only through anonymity and disguise that they could safely move through the country; still they had to fend off roaming bandits and government police.

And the British government constantly sought to expel her from Tibet as would Tibetan officials, had they known the truth of her disguise.

In all, David-Neel spent more than twelve years in Tibet from approximately 1912–1924.

She recorded her considerable exploits and discoveries in a series of popular books which are still in print and still exciting to read.



Alexandra David-Neel (1868-1969)

At age 54, David-Neel became the first Western woman to set foot in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa, where she was officially received by a Dalai Lama.

During her 12-year stay in Tibet she witnessed the mysterious and seemingly magical accomplishments of adepts, masters, sages, and sorcerers.

David-Neel was a practicing Buddhist.

She studied Tibetan culture and language under the supervision of the Panchen Lama, who was Abbot of Tashilumpo, a monastic university-city which was the Tibetan equivalent of Oxford or Harvard.

Situated near Shigatse, it housed 3,800 monks and had an immense

library.

There she earned the equivalent of a Ph.D. in Buddhist studies and was awarded honorary lama's robes.

For any Westerner, much less a French woman, to earn this distinction in Tibet was truly extraordinary—and still is.

His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, says of David-Neel that she was “the first to introduce the real Tibet to the West” and to “convey the authentic flavor of Tibet as she found it.”

While David-Neel's story is quite compelling, the real value of her considerable efforts is in the teachings she brought back for us.

Like Blavatsky and Spalding, David-Neel brought back stories of mystic and spiritual prowess so remarkable that Colonel Bradford's reported experiences pale in comparison.

She described the extraordinary abilities of various “psychic sportsmen” she encountered in her travels.

In fact, David-Neel herself was an accomplished adept for she was initiated in a number of Tibetan rites, and she occasionally demonstrated her accomplishments.

For example, there is the ability to sit naked on a frigid snow peak wrapped in blankets immersed in freezing water, then to turn the water to steam and thoroughly dry the blanket.

This feat is accomplished by mastering a form of breathing called *tumo*.

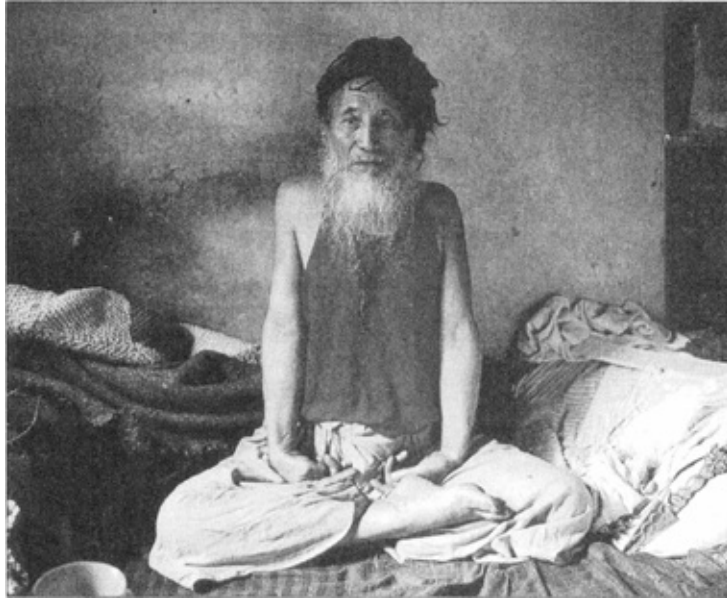
The idea is to generate heat within the body by combining a particular style of breathing with certain thoughts and visualized images.

All of this intensifies inner heat within the solar plexus (see [Chapter Four](#)).

If the practice is performed correctly, one actually starts to feel warm all over.

David-Neel, who had always suffered during cold weather, mastered *tumo* breathing to a degree that enabled her to go about Tibet in relatively light clothing.

Tumo made her free from fear of the cold and from the cold itself.



Tumo breathing, demonstrated by a hermetic yogi.

Early Western travelers to Tibet, among them Alexandra David-Neel and W.Y. Evans-Wentz, reported on this remarkable phenomenon.

Tumo practitioners could sit naked in the snow, wrapped in blankets immersed in freezing water.

They were then able to turn the water to steam and thoroughly dry the blankets.

Photograph by Thomas L. Kelly from Tibet, Reflections from the Wheel of Life,

published by Abbeville Press, New York, 1993.

Centuries earlier, one of Tibet's preeminent yogis had championed tumo for its practical value as an alternative to heavy winter clothing.

Tumo adepts could comfortably sit in the frozen mountains wearing nothing more than cotton clothing.

Monks melted the ice off blankets as a way of demonstrating their

mastery of tumo breathing.

David-Neel also witnessed
lung-gom (trance walking).

This is the ability to stride rapidly across the landscape for days on end without stopping for food or water.

Masters of lung-gom move as if flying over the ground, which is how many have described this awesome skill of sustained fleet-footedness.

The Tibetan lamas master this after difficult training involving breathing exercises, chants, and visualizations.

The key to lung-gom is to concentrate the mind on the element of air and on all its associations, especially that of lightness.

You do this so intensely that you become, in practical terms, identified with air.

David-Neel describes one
lung-gomp-pa who had so mastered the skill that he had to wear heavy iron chains just to stay on the ground and to keep from floating off.

Watching another trance walker, David-Neel noted that he didn't run, but rather he "seemed to lift himself from the ground, proceeding by leaps."

His face was perfectly calm and impassive, his eyes wide-open, fixed on a distant object in space.

His steps were as regular as a pendulum and he moved with the elasticity of a ball, rebounding each time his feet touched the ground.

"My servants dismounted and bowed their heads to the ground as the lama passed before us, but he went his way apparently unaware of our presence," she wrote.

Trance walkers, while maintaining this state, could cover tremendous distances in a short time and arrive without appearing to be at all tired. Clearly this was a feat of practical value in this sparsely populated land of difficult terrain.

Evans-Wentz's Work Lends Credibility to Bradford's Claims

If the practice of lung-gom trance walking were taught universally in Western schools, it would eliminate the need for all forms of motorized transport, even bridges, observed W.Y. Evans-Wentz, an American scholar who sojourned in Tibet between 1917 and 1922.

Furthermore, he said, tumo breathing would eliminate the need for central heating.

Based on what he had learned in Tibet, Evans-Wentz believed that the powers of yoga, both mental and physical, were unsurpassed.

“The supreme Magician in yoga is Mind,” he explained.

“By controlling his mind, a master of yoga can control everything in the physical world, even the atom.”

Evans-Wentz’s words echo those of Colonel Bradford, whose Tibetan fountain of youth included a series of yogic exercises reinforced with mental magic.

Like David-Neel, Evans-Wentz was a pioneer in the introduction of Tibetan teachings in the West.

And like her, he not only reported on miracles of spiritual accomplishment, he also explained how to achieve them—something Colonel Bradford would also do when he followed in their footsteps roughly one decade later.

It’s interesting to note once again that the accounts of those who preceded Bradford tend to validate his far-fetched tale.

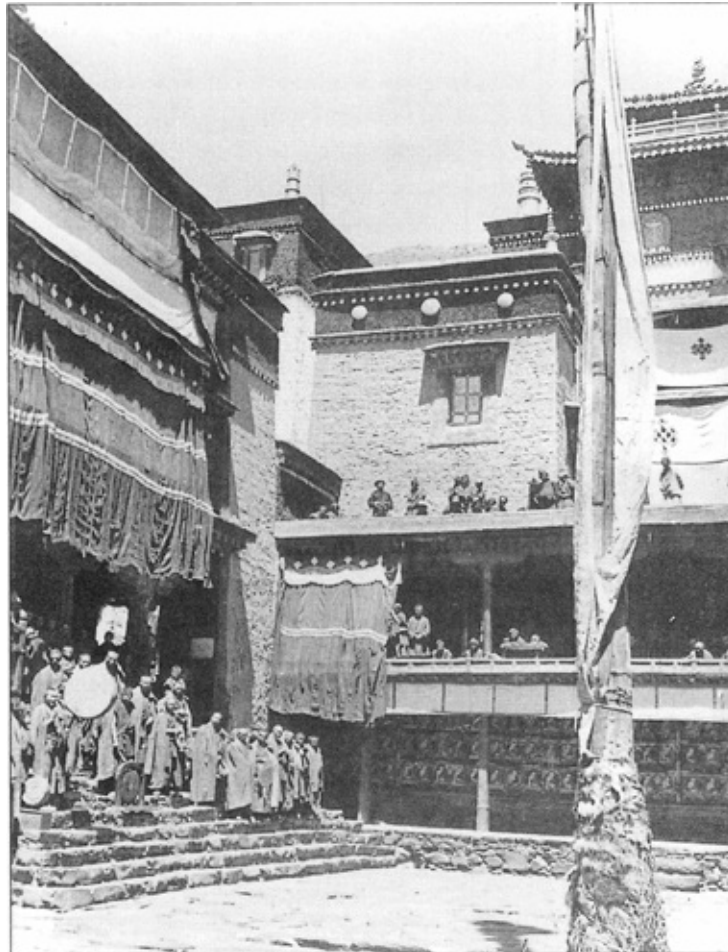
Youthfulness and the Power of the Mind

“Strange things, seemingly contrary to all known laws of nature, are reported again and again by the few travelers who have been able to come into close contact with Tibet and its inhabitants,” observed German writer Theodore Illion in the 1930s.

These reports of miraculous accomplishments and mysterious secrets so fascinated the German-born traveler that he set out on his own for Tibet in the mid-1930s.

He wanted to see it firsthand, to meet its fabled cave-dwelling hermits,

to personally witness the strange and miraculous phenomena of which he had read.



The Monastic University at Tashilumpo (1907)

Here Alexandra David-Neel studied under the Panchen Lama. She earned the equivalent of a Ph.D. in Buddhist studies and was awarded honorary lama's robes.

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The Hedin Foundation, The National Museum of Ethnography, Sweden.

Like those before him, Illion traveled furtively and in disguise, and his

journey exposed him to great difficulty and constant danger.

But in the end, Illion's efforts were rewarded.

He, like David-Neel, witnessed such marvels as lung-gom trance walkers, the flying lamas who vaulted across the landscape in seeming defiance of the laws of gravity.

Like Baird Spalding, Illion was also keen to meet Tibetan lamas who had mastered the art of physical longevity, the cave-dwelling hermits who managed to remain young almost indefinitely.

He had heard rumors that some hermits lived to be 500, even 600 years old.

Illion met and stayed for five days with one such man, a hermit who appeared to be about 30 years old, though his actual age, we are told, was 90.

One day during a two-man exercise, Illion clasped the hermit's body "It was elastic and lithe, like the body of a boy of 19," he discovered.

The man told Illion that he hardly ever ate anything and spent most of his time fasting.

"Is this then why you look so young," Illion asked him.

"No," replied the hermit.

"It's being free from the poisons of fear, worry, and anxiety that keeps me young."

One of the keys to a supple longevity is the art of relaxation, explained the hermit.

This is not the luxury of a soft chair, but the ease of a mind that does not indulge worry, fear, or anxiety, he told Illion.

You must find this state of psychic relaxation, of being rather than having.

When you always want to gain something, this puts you into a state of being cramped, both mentally and physically.

A lifetime of inner cramping ages your mind and body and eventually ends your life.



Theodore Illion, a German-born traveler who journeyed to Tibet in the mid-1930s.

Like David-Neel before him, he witnessed such marvels as the flying lamas called lung-gom trance walkers.

Most important, if you want to remain young, you must feel young, the hermit continued.

Youthfulness is not something that can be achieved purely by practices.

If you are old at heart, if you feel and act old, physical old age will quickly follow, regardless of diets or practices.

Nor can you achieve perpetual youth by drinking some elixir of immortality.

To achieve youthfulness, first you must make an inner effort of will and have a true change of heart and view.

Youth is foremost a quality of mind and freedom from habitual ways of thinking and living.

Again, we find shades of this view in the words of Colonel Bradford.

The key to making the Five Rites work, says Bradford, is mental attitude. If you are to become younger, you must mentally erase the concept of aging, and replace it with the image and feelings of youthfulness. Says Colonel Bradford, “If you are able to see yourself as young, in spite of your age, others will see you that way too.”

Longevity Secrets from a Contemporary Lama

The published accounts of Tibetan travelers from the late 19th and early 20th centuries make it clear that, whether or not the story of Colonel Bradford’s Tibetan expedition was factual, it could easily have been so.

But what of the Five Rites themselves?

Are they authentic?

Was there a tradition of longevity teachings in the Himalayan region that might put the Five Rites into the context of traditional instruction?

After all, Colonel Bradford surely didn’t pluck the exercises out of thin mountain air.

This much we know: There are many stories in Buddhism about attaining long life through special practices.

They include numerous Tibetan legends about highly accomplished, nearly superhuman adepts called

Mahasiddhas—men and women who have attained a high degree of spiritual enlightenment and make

themselves available to teach students.

Among the *Mahasiddhas* known for attaining immortality or extraordinary longevity, and for remaining on Earth to instruct humanity in this were the

Nath Siddhas.

It is believed that many of the most important *Nath Siddhas* are still alive and meditating even today in secluded Himalayan caves.

They have vowed not to leave the physical plane until all human souls are saved from suffering.

Lest we form the impression that tales of Nath Siddhas and near-immortal lamas are the stuff of ancient folklore, the contemporary example of a well-known Tibetan

rinpoche (revered teacher) offers another perspective.

He is Namkhai Norbu (1938—), who lives in Italy.

Norbu is one of the best-known contemporary Tibetan teachers and has authored several books in English.

According to Tibetan belief, great masters of the past hid their wisdom teachings for the future, literally burying them in caves.

It is the responsibility of lamas in a later time, such as ours, to find these buried teachings and reveal them to the world.

One day in 1984 while meditating in Nepal in a sacred cave, Namkhai Norbu discovered an authentic longevity teaching.

He received it in an unusual manner, through a series of dreams and meditations.

It was in this sanctified cave, known as the Cave of Long Life, that two famous Tibetan masters had attained immortality many centuries earlier.

Namkhai Norbu appreciated the situation: a secret practice for developing a long and firm life was now being miraculously revealed to him by ancient masters.

It was up to him to write it down for the benefit of his many students in the West.

The material included chants, special exercises for breathing and energy control, visualizations, and instructions pertaining to chakras and energy channels in the body.

Norbu now teaches these longevity practices to his students in the United States and Europe.

Again we have a parallel, this time contemporary, which lends credibility to Colonel Bradford's story.

The matter of chakras, or energy circuits in the body, is central to Colonel Bradford's Five Rites (see

[Chapter Four](#)).

The discovery by a living Tibetan rinpoche of ancient teachings that also relate longevity practices to energy fields in the human body adds further substance to Colonel Bradford's account.

For those who encounter a stumbling block in the outlandishness of the Colonel's story, this chapter should help bridge the believability gap. In it, we have discovered that Tibetan adventurers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed miraculous and magical happenings and beheld extraordinary feats of longevity.

The historical record they have left us supports the substance, if not the details, of Colonel Bradford's reported experiences.

In light of these eyewitness accounts, surely it is not unreasonable to believe that perhaps, more than half a century ago, Colonel Bradford did bring us something genuine from the "sealed and silent" mountain kingdom.

Richard Leviton has been a natural health journalist for twenty years.

He was Senior Writer for East West Journal (now Natural Health), Yoga Journal, and The Quest, and is the author of numerous books, including

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Alternative Medicine Digest and Future Medicine Publishing.

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