

KATHARINE EMMA MALTWOOD
ARTIST
1878-1961

Rosemary Alicia Brown

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The Maltwood Art Museum and Gallery, University of Victoria

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The Post-War Works

The outbreak of the First World War led to an interruption in Katharine Maltwood's artistic activities. Close by the Maltwoods' home in Tadworth, Surrey, a training camp was established for British Public School boys. Hearing the camp had no medical facilities, the artist organized and ran a hospital in two army huts sanctioned by the War Office as a private enterprise.

Like many of her contemporaries Katharine Maltwood was appalled by the tragedy, sacrifice and disillusionment of the war years. Her reaction can be seen in a symbolic bronze, *The Mills of God*, which was first exhibited in 1919 at the Ridley Art Club, in the Grafton Galleries. It met with considerable praise and prompted *The Observer* art critic to write: "The writhing, but rhythmically linked, mass of agonized humanity, inexorably crushed between two solid stone wheels, is like a Michelangelo 'Last Judgment' compressed into a few figures — it would lend itself to treatment on a larger scale, and it might even serve as a War Memorial."

As the War drew to a close the Maltwoods decided to escape from the vicinity of London by moving to Somerset. Anticipating John Maltwood's retirement they purchased Chilton Priory, a large house and estate near the village of Chilton Polden, which remained their home for nearly twenty years. In the pursuit of her artistic career, however, Katharine Maltwood preferred the atmosphere of London's West End and decided to rent a studio at East Heath Road, a picturesque corner of Kensington. It was here she executed her post war pieces and lodged while returning to take further courses in Fine Art under Frederick Brown at the Slade School of Art from 1918-19.

In these years the Maltwoods also began to travel more extensively, being particularly fascinated by the art and culture of ancient civilizations. They were drawn to the aura of the East, journeying to India in 1917 and to Japan three years later, where they visited many of the great Buddhist monuments and shrines. Like many of her artistic predecessors Katharine Maltwood was captivated by the ancient art and history of Egypt. She travelled up the Nile Valley in 1919 with a party of friends and a press clipping shows her perched on the knees of a statue of Rameses II at Luxor Temple "drawing a relief

portrait of King Tutankhamen on the wall opposite."

On John Maltwood's retirement from business in 1921 the couple made a leisurely trip around the world. Their sojourns took them through Europe to Italy and Greece from where they sailed for Egypt and North Africa. They then toured Palestine and crossed Arabia to India and Ceylon. From Malaysia they cruised the Indonesian Islands seeking out Bali, Sumatra and Java and then progressed north to China, Korea and Japan. On their return through North America they spent a few weeks at the Empress Hotel in Victoria where they called on several old friends who had settled in British Columbia. In 1923 a press clipping from July reports that Katharine Maltwood had recently returned from Tunisia. The last few weeks of 1923 and first two months of 1924 were spent in Luxor, Egypt where the recently discovered tomb of Tutankhamen in the Valley of the Kings had brought thousands of tourists, celebrities and press reporters all eager to catch a glimpse of the magnificent treasures.

In 1927 and 28 the Maltwoods made another expedition to India touring from Delhi south through central India to Kandy, Ceylon. In the 1930's they returned to the Far East visiting several countries including Vietnam. It was during these years of protracted travel that the couple purchased many of the *objets d'art* now in the Maltwood Collection. In addition Katharine Maltwood became increasingly absorbed in the study of ancient mythology, religion and Eastern philosophy, particularly Buddhism. These interests were not unusual among the exclusive circle of friends and acquaintances in which the Maltwoods moved, not only in England but around the world.

To understand this circle and the nature and purpose of Katharine Maltwood's interests one has to return to the late 19th Century. In the 1890's there was a growing interest in religious mysticism, with its background of occult practices, in the cultural centres of Europe. The curiosity in the occult was typified by the exotic speculations of the magician Eliphas Levi while Eastern thought was made fashionable by works such as Madame Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*.³⁰ As a result the myths and monuments of Asia took the place of Greece as a source of inspiration for several

artists in the Symbolist tradition and India became the mystical centre for many European intellectuals.

The philosophical background to this upsurge in religious mysticism was provided among others by Edouard Schuré, whose book *The Great Initiates* of 1889 exerted a strong influence in France and elsewhere.³¹ Schuré's dislike of the mechanized, civilized world and desire for the resurrection of spiritual life closely corresponded to Symbolist views. He believed art had lost its sense of the divine and that the present generation was without ideals, inspiration and faith. Thus he sought to rediscover the profound learning, the secret doctrine and the occult influence of the great initiates or masters of ancient wisdom. In this he was particularly influential on Katharine Maltwood's attitudes towards both her art and her professed "rediscovery" of the Glastonbury Zodiac and the knowledge it embodied.

Eastern thought had become increasingly appealing to many Westerners dissatisfied with their times, largely due to the foundation of the Theosophical Society in 1875 by Madame Blavatsky, in connection with Col. H. S. Olcott and others. The objects of the Society were set out as firstly to establish a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity which was conceived of in a transcendental rather than materialistic sense. Secondly to promote the study of comparative religion and philosophy and finally to encourage a systematic investigation into the mystic potencies of life and matter.

The intention to study comparative religion and philosophy soon crystallized in an exposition of a more or less definite system of dogmatic teaching. The leading thesis seems to have been that all the great religions of the world originated from the same supreme source, and that they were diverse expressions of one fundamental truth. In order to discern this original wisdom appeal was made to a secret doctrine and esoteric teaching which Madame Blavatsky proclaimed had been held for ages as a sacred possession and trust by certain mysterious adepts in occultism or "Mahatmas" with whom she said she was in psychical as well as direct physical communication.

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky was a highly flamboyant, strong willed and somewhat enigmatic character. Born in the Ukraine in 1831 she was married at seventeen to a Russian official from Caucasia who was very much her senior. They separated after a few months and during the next twenty years Madame Blavatsky appears to have travelled widely in India, America and Mexico. She also made two adventurous trips to Tibet which she later alluded to as the veiled period of her life and spoke

vaguely of as a seven years' Himalayan retreat.

In the early 1870's Madame Blavatsky gained prominence among the spiritualists of the United States for her occult powers. Several of her books such as *Isis Unveiled*, 1877, and *The Secret Doctrine*, 1888, reveal the influence of writings on magic, mysticism and masonry. She had studied occult and kabbalistic literature together with the sacred writings of India and decided to combine spiritualistic control with the Buddhist legends of Tibetan sages. Thus she claimed that her masters, two Tibetan mahâtâmâs, supplied her with sound and ancient doctrine, exhibited their "astral bodies" to her, incited her to summon phenomena for the conversion of sceptics and precipitated messages which reached her from the confines of Tibet in an instant of time.

Madame Blavatsky believed she was chosen to use her spiritualism to combat the growing materialism of the world. This led to the establishment of the Theosophical Society in 1875 with headquarters firstly in New York and slightly later in Adyar, a suburb of Madras in India. Here Madame Blavatsky continued in her efforts to gain converts to theosophy. Although in 1884 an attempt was made by the Society for Psychical Research to prove her a fraud and a trickster, when Madame Blavatsky died in 1891 she was the acknowledged head of a community numbering almost 100,000, with journalistic organs in London, Paris, New York and Madras. After her death there was a split in the Society and several separate groups were formed, the one in England becoming more or less independent.

The principal tenets of theosophy are hard to define precisely but three of the most important were the constitution and development of the personality or ego; the doctrine of "Karma" or the sum of an individual's bodily, mental and spiritual growth; and the Way or Path towards enlightenment and emancipation. The basic belief in the "ultimate oneness" which underlies and sustains all phenomenal diversity was derived from various forms of Buddhist thought as was a large proportion of theosophical doctrine. In addition it involved an amalgam of other sources including Vedic, Egyptian, Greek, Occult and Kabbalistic literature.

The physical methods and spiritual exercises recommended by theosophists are those inculcated in the systems known in Hindu philosophy as Râja Yoga. The aim is that through denial of the evil forces of selfishness, antagonism and desire for material things, and through strenuous efforts to gain new knowledge, faculties and psychic control a higher

wisdom will be obtained. The ultimate result will be absorption in the supreme unity or Nirvana.

It is in the context of this late 19th Century fervour for religious mysticism and Eastern philosophy that the interests of Katharine Maltwood must be viewed for she was very much a child of her age. She was drawn to the study of comparative religions in her youth through the teaching of Gertrude Ingham whose ideas were influenced by theosophy and Eastern thought. Like Gertrude Ingham, she also later turned to the writings of the celebrated Indian writer and poet Tagore who was noted for his reinterpretation of the Upanishad philosophy. Many of the books and periodicals in the Maltwood Collection are concerned with religious mysticism, Buddhism and theosophy.³² These Katharine Maltwood studied closely and came to believe, like many of her contemporaries, that their esoteric message offered lessons relevant to the spiritual blindness of her age.

Her sympathies with the Eastern outlook intensified around the time of the First World War, no doubt in reaction against the bloodshed and devastation in Europe. She began to frequent the book shop of John M. Watkins of Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, which was one of the most famous centres of Far Eastern and Theosophical literature. This shop had become a favourite haunt to many in Buddhist and Theosophical circles at that time. John Watkins himself had been closely associated with the late H. P. Blavatsky and was particularly fond of reminiscing about her. The Maltwoods came to know him well as he later published and sold Katharine Maltwood's books on the Glastonbury Zodiac and she often visited and consulted with him at his home nearby her London studio.

In the 1920's there was an upsurge of interest in Buddhism in England as the esoteric wisdom of the ages and a return to Blavatsky trend swept the Theosophical Society. Although the Adyar Theosophical Society had done much to revive Buddhism in the East it had fast deserted the principles which Madame Blavatsky had founded it to proclaim. The psychic turn that had been given the Movement by the Adyar group led many Western Theosophists to either leave or disassociate themselves with that branch of the Society. This occurred in England for instance when the Buddhist Lodge within the Theosophical Society decided to become an independent Buddhist Society in 1926. Its founder, Christmas Humphreys, was a friend of Katharine Maltwood and she appears to have been closely associated with the aims and beliefs of this group.

The English Buddhist Society was scholarly in approach and dedicated to the expansion of Buddhism in the West. Christmas Humphreys, who later became a well known judge at the Old Bailey, was an avowed Buddhist from his seventeenth year. He became one of the foremost Western authors on Buddhism and travelled widely in the Far East. Although disapproving of the later psychic trend in the Theosophical Society he firmly believed in the teachings of Madame Blavatsky as an exposition of an ancient Wisdom-Religion which antedates all others and that Buddhism was the noblest of its branches. In addition he became a keen student of Zen Buddhism and was a British agent for the works of Dr. D. T. Suzuki of Japan whose books created a great interest in Zen in the West.

Katharine Maltwood was similarly impressed by Dr. Suzuki's work, being attracted to the intuitive approach in Zen with its emphasis on meditation and self knowledge as a means to sudden enlightenment. Daisetz T. Suzuki, who was professor of Buddhist philosophy at the Otani University in Kyoto, Japan, became the recognized pioneer and foremost interpreter of Zen Buddhism in the West. He lectured extensively in the United States and Europe and was a personal friend of the Maltwoods, staying with them on several occasions while in England.

It is with this background in mind that we must understand the changes in style and outlook that occurred in Katharine Maltwood's post war work. A mystic Asiatic Spirit entered her sculpture and she moved beyond Arts and Crafts principles in an attempt to offer the spectator a new relation to life and its deepest meanings by reference to Eastern philosophy. She conceived the idea of the sculptor as an "idol maker" revealing great spiritual and inner truths and serving as an inspiration to those striving for enlightenment. A more complete explanation of these views appears in her only surviving statement on art, a type written note, entitled "The Makers of Idols":

Throughout the ages man has expressed his mind in idols. We know at a glance what manner of man he was by the kind of god he visualized and created in stone or wood, bronze or marble.

The trade of idol making has almost died out in Europe, to the detriment of sculpture. Looked at from the artistic and historical standpoint, if not from the religious, this is a loss to the generations to follow.

An agonised figure on a cross, yes, his Saintly Mother and a few canonized human beings and portraits of celebrities, war memorials and nondescript shapes that mean nothing. What will the future read from these remains? A tortured

meaningless world, with no faith, ideals, or for that matter intellect, of a spiritual nature.

Is it not possible to breathe aspiration and inspiration into our sculpture instead of grossness and soulless mechanism? Suffering may be there that is inevitable in a changing world but it is possible to “become perfect through suffering,” it is a dynamic change into something finer and more spiritual. Out of the mass of struggling humanity there must evolve something we can believe in, some “divine event to which the whole creation moves.”

That should be the “metier” of sculpture. The idol maker should suggest higher and hidden values that we are moved by aesthetically and from which we receive definite inspiration.

Russia has broken her idols, what has she set up in place of them? France broke hers some time before. What does America worship? And what ideals has the once great British Empire? Yet God’s laws are forever the same, why do we not translate His marvels into Art? Expressions of God.

This note with its quotation from Tennyson’s *In Memoriam* clearly reveals Katharine Maltwood’s debt to the Victorian Era. Like artists of the Arts and Crafts Movement she sees the advance of technology and industrialization as a threat to man’s spiritual and physical well being. The “soulless mechanism” and materialism of the day were she believed destroying man’s faith and spiritual ideals as well as the security, culture and traditions of the leading Western nations. The solutions however are now to be found in Buddhist and Eastern thought where the aim is to “become perfect through suffering.” In Buddhism “suffering” is a sense of being imperfect and incomplete and a necessary evil before entering the way to enlightenment or Nirvana. Its cause is mainly selfishness, the illusion of “I” or the ego which must be eliminated to achieve a true awareness of cosmic unity. In Buddhism there is no separate soul or quality of permanence in life but only one life force which moves within the universal law towards its own perfection. Through successive reincarnations the higher one reaches in thought the more thought is illuminated by the light of the ultimate spiritual awakening Buddhists call Enlightenment. Thus to Katharine Maltwood sculpture should be didactic and an inspiration to the beholder by suggesting “the higher and hidden values” that lead to this perfection.

Another source of influence on the artist’s philosophy at this time was the writing of Tolstoy. In Russia, another crumbling Empire, mysticism occupied a far more important place than aestheticism. The Russian late 19th century decadents were represented by Dostoevsky’s *The Possessed* and the Nihilists while Tolstoy “became the guru of a Europe which was

already drawn towards Asia.”³³ Tolstoy’s ideas on art are expressed in several of the art books Katharine Maltwood referred to. For instance Harold Speed’s textbook on drawing takes its definition of art from Tolstoy claiming: “the visible world is to the artist, as it were, a wonderful garment, at times revealing to him the Beyond, the Inner Truth there is in all things. He has a consciousness of some correspondence with something the other side of visible things and divinely felt through them, a ‘still small voice’ which he is impelled to interpret to men.”³⁴ To Tolstoy true art must appeal to the religious perception of the brotherhood of man and must impart an emotional impression to the mind. Oriental artists are admired because the spiritual essence of things seems to be more real to them and similarly primitive art because the direct emotional significance of line and form is expressed more clearly there.

In addition Katharine Maltwood annotated her agreement with Sir William Petrie’s *Arts and Crafts of Ancient Egypt* in its quotations from Tolstoy and also in its claim that Egyptian art completely fulfilled the true aims of art. To Petrie it embodied and expressed the greatest qualities of the ancient Egyptian character which he enumerated as stability, strength, endurance, love of truth and justice and the discipline and harmony which bonded Egyptian society.³⁵ It was felt at this time that the study of ancient Egyptian civilization and religion would lead to the discovery of a lost body of human knowledge. This explains something of Katharine Maltwood’s fascination with Egyptian art and philosophy and her attitude towards it.

The artist’s study of Egyptology and the new mystic character in her work appears in an alabaster group *Infinity* which she also entitled *Isis, Horus and Osiris*. Here she combines Egyptian characteristics with a Western feeling for planes and angles and a strict adherence to the block. In subject matter it refers to the myth of Osiris, the Egyptian God of the Dead, who represents moral good and fights for the welfare of the human soul. Osiris is killed by his opponent Seth and, watched by his consort Isis, revives in another form to urge his son Horus to avenge him. With the aid of Thoth or reason Horus destroys the evil power of Seth. The myth is a picture of the daily life of the sun combating darkness yet at last succumbing to it, to appear again in renewed splendour, as the young Horus, a solar god triumphs over Seth. It appealed to Katharine Maltwood because it is also a picture of human life, the perpetual struggles and conflicts and final seeming destruction, to be restored in the new youth

of a brighter existence. This view agrees with her Eastern outlook that suffering is not wholly evil but has its beneficent aspect in the accomplishment of final perfection.

In 1920 the *Caryatid, Priest of Buddha*, was exhibited at the London Salon after being rejected by the Royal Academy. Being carved directly in Portland stone without a preparatory model it met with more approval among art critics. The piece was admired as having “great dignity and grandeur” and for expounding “in one massive head the religion of Buddha”. The peaceful pose of meditation and the atmosphere of deep harmony are characteristics Katharine Maltwood sought to express in much of her sculpture from these years.

The Spirits of Just Men Made Perfect has like *Priest of Buddha* apparently not survived. A mystical and

fantastic conception it shows the souls of those who strive for perfection, lifted one by one, high in the hands of a great angel and growing smaller as they approach ultimate union with the Almighty.

One of the most interesting works remaining from this period is an alabaster figure entitled *Archangel* or *The Holy Grail*. In 1922 a plaster model with gilt was exhibited at the Daily Express Women’s exhibition and the following year the completed alabaster version was shown at the Royal Academy. Press reports mention that it was designed for colossal reproduction as the roof-supporting, external pillars of a domed cathedral. The effect is of solid strength and continuity of material with concern for architectural function.

M964.1.357
The Mills of God
 by Katharine Emma Maltwood, 1919



M964.1.359
Infinity
 by Katharine E. Maltwood, n.d.



The title *The Holy Grail* refers to her interest in Arthurian legends where she believed the cup symbolized the vault of heaven inserted on earth. She felt it embodied the lost knowledge man must rediscover to achieve spiritual salvation. The work was also referred to as *Dweller in the Innermost* and *Samadhi*. The latter refers to the name given in Yoga to the state of perfection reached when one's mind is completely restrained from mental activity and is situated in a state of transcendental happiness. Which title she preferred is unclear, however they all reveal her interest in conveying a spiritual message to the beholder.

It is interesting that several critics took objection to the figure on the grounds that it "might have been improved . . . by a less staunch adherence to motives from Maya art." The artist strongly objected to these accusations and in a letter to *Drawing* in July 1923 says "Don't you think it's a kind of cosmic consciousness that works through all races getting more or less the same results? For I am convinced that whatever influences may have shaped my work, Maya has not." A more likely source of inspiration is Egyptian art since Katharine Maltwood had recently made two trips through Egypt. The colossal roof supporting figures in the temple of Abu Simbel, which she photographed, come to mind. Further evidence of Egyptian influence is suggested by a preparatory pencil sketch of the Holy Grail drawn on one of the Maltwood books on Egyptian art.³⁶

In 1924 Katharine Maltwood won success at the British Exhibition, Wembley when two works, *The Mills of God* and *Aspiration*, were awarded diplomas. The latter also went under the title *Plucking Feathers from the Eagle's Tail* and was inspired by the famous lines from Browning's *Andrea del Santo*, "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" A bronze relief, it attracted attention due to its daring and original conception. Critics were struck by the curious Z-shaped figure with its outstretched arms suggestive of flight. In style the figure reveals the organic, Rodinesque qualities of her pre-war works.

Three years later another new piece appeared. *The Daily Sketch* published an illustration of *Mirage* which according to the caption depicted "a traveller hypnotized by the spirit of the desert." Again the experience of her travels is displayed together with the expression of philosophical thought. In contrast to *Aspiration*, here the Art Deco and Cubist forms suggest her awareness of current artistic trends. Katharine Maltwood's last work of significance seems to have been a bronze monument of oriental

inspiration, *The Path of Enlightenment*, which was exhibited by the Royal Academy in 1929. The artist was then fifty one. The composition may well have been inspired by a verse, referring to the Buddha's enlightenment, which she marked off in Dr. Suzuki's *Essays on Zen Buddhism*:

As on a crag, on crest of mountain standing,
A man might watch the people far below,
E'n so do thou, O Wisdom fair, ascending,
O Seer of all, the terraced heights of Truth,
Look down, from grief released, upon the nations,
Sunken in grief, oppressed with birth and age.
Arise thou Hero! Conqueror in the battle!
Thou freed from debt! Lord of the pilgrim band!
Walk the world o'er, and sublime and blessed Teacher!
Teach us the Truth; there are those who'll understand.³⁷

The climax to Katharine Maltwood's career as a sculptress had come two years previously in 1927 when she held an exhibition in her Castlewood Studio in London. The studio was situated on a narrow, mews-like lane off Kensington High Street and, according to one report, appeared from the front as a tiny house, only remarkable for its fresh paint. Once inside, however, one found oneself in an enormous lofty room with a square gallery above and a little garden beyond. It was here Katharine Maltwood exhibited sixteen pieces of sculpture in October 1927.

The interior effects, created to enhance the sculptural exhibits, gave the studio a mystical atmosphere and critics wrote of "A Bizarre Exhibition." It was described by the *Daily Express* art critic in 1927 as follows:

Imagine a huge studio divided into shrines by gold curtains from ceiling to floor, and in every shrine a statue recalling some mystic idol of the East carved in stone or alabaster or cast in bronze and you have some idea of the effect of this strange exhibition as one enters. The studio also contains an organ and a gallery for string quartets. The electric lights are concealed in oriental lamps.

The artist undoubtedly now conceived of her works as "shrines" and of her studio as a "temple" guiding the way to spiritual truth. This is indicated not only in press reports but also in private correspondence. After viewing the studio a friend, Katharine Spencer, wrote in gratitude that "the sculptures carry their message strongly to those who understand." She concluded "I think of your studio now as a sort of temple where groping souls may come to be helped and to be drawn nearer the light." Katharine Maltwood underlined the latter since it was precisely how she wished her works and studio to be understood.



The Priest of Buddha
by Katharine Emma Maltwood, 1920

M964.1.358
Aspiration
by Katharine Emma Maltwood, 1924



The Holy Grail, plaster model
by Katharine Emma Maltwood, 1922



M964.1.356
The Holy Grail
by Katharine Emma Maltwood, 1922



It is of significance that in the same year a novel by Lily Adams Beck was published called *The House of Fulfillment*. In it a familiar character appears under the name of Brynhild Ingmar, a sculptress. The *Manchester City News* of Saturday, February 4, 1928, revealed that the sculptress in the book was indeed Katharine Maltwood:

There is great intensity of feeling and considerable intensity of thinking in this unusual story. Adams Beck has derived her inspiration from the ancient Indian philosophy of the Upanishads and has re-created the traditions and methods of this philosophy in a modern setting exclusively Indian. By one slight human incident the story as a story is made to hold together and the interest maintained throughout the exotic scenes of which the novel is mainly composed. These are concerned with the priestly agencies of the monasteries of India: their efficacy in establishing the equilibrium of life and the making of man's mastership of his own soul. The result as exemplified in the various characters is convincing, none more so than in the exposition of the sculptor in the character of Brynhild Ingmar, who is the thinly veiled personality of Katharine Maltwood, the well known London sculptor. The analysis of the works of this accomplished artist, unusual as such a procedure is in a novel, adds greatly to the interest of a work which is as powerful as it is unusual.

The setting for the story is high among the mountains of Kashmir where a rich and cultured English couple, the Dunbars, had come to live and study. With them lived Brynhild Ingmar, a Canadian sculptress of genius, who attributed her phenomenal powers to the study of yoga. She is shown in an advanced stage of Buddhist perfection and in superhuman accord with nature and its every mood.

They are joined by Cardonald, a man running away from his conscience, and at the beginning of the quest for self fulfilment. The novel unfolds into the bizarre love story of Cardonald and the radiant Brynhild Ingmar. Cardonald begins the study of Yoga and is put through its exercises in mental concentration, its physical discipline and its emphasis on the side by side development of body and mind.

The characters set off on an expedition to a remote Tibetan monastery of ascetic Lamas in search of ancient manuscripts of Ultimate Wisdom. The description of the journey with its high mountain passes, flooded rivers, savage bandits and bizarre adventures is set out in the jewelled and exotic imagery typical of Mrs. Beck's literary style.

The sculptures mentioned as belonging to the heroine are several of Katharine Maltwood's major pieces. They are likewise described in a rich and intense style and are given a philosophical interpretation.

The first work we come across is *The Holy Grail* which in the novel is called *Ecstasy, the Buddhist Angel* or is more preferably given its Indian name, *Samadhi*. It is discussed at the first meeting of Cardonald and the sculptress where it is revealed that her work has been exhibited in the West for two years under the signature Narendra. It had caused a sensation in Europe and was especially praised for recapturing "the inspiration of the ancient great frescoes and sculptures of early Buddhist art in the net of masterly modern techniques." To Cardonald the works were "the very voice of Asia;" however he at first refuses to believe their author Narendra was a woman. Of Samadhi he exclaims "That's a man's work Women do charming things, but they don't do that." The sculptress retorts angrily by telling him he has "the true English idea of the inferiority of women in matters of art" and that nothing but experience will rid him of his disbelief.³⁸ This makes an interesting reference to the renowned masculinity of Katharine Maltwood's style and her sympathies with women's emancipation.

A few days later Cardonald visits Brynhild Ingmar's studio which the hero describes as "high pitched as a church, bare, austere, but beautiful for from the roof hung curtains of some thin yellow stuff, controlling the light and dividing great length into what I felt to be antechapels leading up to some inner shrine: themselves peopled with dreams made visible, but yet a highway to the supreme expression of some one perception..."³⁹ That it is one and the same as Katharine Maltwood's Kensington studio is obvious.

The work to first attract Cardonald's attention is *Mirage*. He experiences a vision of a vast sea of sand with camel and rider drawn down and absorbed by the great spirit of the desert. He says the work "reminds and reveals all the experiences of illusion,"⁴⁰ referring to the Buddhist concept of the illusion of self, separateness and the earthly idea of time as opposed to a true awareness of harmonious unity. Thus the man who is hypnotized by this illusion or "Mirage" sinks to his ruin.

Brynhild Ingmar then shows him her latest work which she explains "completes the mirage". This is the *Path of Enlightenment* which Cardonald describes as follows: "I saw the Buddha after his enlightenment looking out over the world in a deep dream of peace... looking downward he beheld the earth in all its grief and crimes with the serenity of perfect comprehension." Brynhild Ingmar tells him "The first was Mirage, This is the truth."⁴¹

Katharine Maltwood's bronze relief *Aspiration* is discussed slightly later when Cardonald returns to

the studio for further contemplation. He feels the eagle feathers are a token of remembrance of the uncapturable and far out of reach that would wing life forward to higher heights of understanding. To Cardonald this was as much attainment as one could hope to achieve in the “crippled state of consciousness which most of us are content to call living.”⁴²

The final work to be observed is *The Mills of God* which Brynhild Ingmar calls “my Evolution” alluding to the Buddhist evolution of the soul through reincarnation towards ultimate perfection. In terms of this philosophy the group represents “cosmic millstones grinding chaos into order and beauty.”⁴³ Katharine Maltwood seems to have approved of the interpretations made by Lily Adams Beck since she recommended *The House of Fulfilment* in her will for a fuller description of these sculptures.

The character of Brynhild Ingmar also seems to reveal something of Katharine Maltwood’s own personality and approach to art. To strangers Brynhild appeared cold and rather aloof but to those who knew “the secret” she was a genius of singular beauty. She is shown to have no trace of self consciousness and takes no personal pride in her artistic achievements. Her work is understood as the expression of a higher level of consciousness, achieved through the discipline of Yoga, which allowed her to perceive beyond the limits of reality. By realizing her oneness with the surrounding world and by losing all sense of present time Brynhild was able to attain supernormal powers. Her sculptures represent this realized knowledge, “each was a world in itself, developing the utmost spiritual meaning latent in matter.”⁴⁴

To say that Katharine Maltwood had achieved such advanced powers through her study of Yoga would be an exaggeration, however she was undoubtedly influenced by Eastern philosophy in her life style and general approach to art. Indeed, in the preface of the novel Mrs. Beck dedicates the story to her as “a sculptor more deeply imbued with the spirit of Asia than any other known to me.”

Lily Adams Beck was a very close friend of Katharine Maltwood’s in the days of her Castlewood Studio in London. Their outlook and interests appear to have been very similar. Mrs. Beck, who also went under the pseudonyms E. Barrington and Louis Moresby, had lived for many years in the Orient. She had travelled widely in India, Tibet, China, Burma, Japan and Egypt studying native customs and religions particularly transcendentalism, reincarnation and the Yogi doctrines. She began novel writing in earnest in 1922 and until her death published at least two books each year. As Lily Adams

Beck she wrote esoteric novels with themes inspired by Eastern philosophy.⁴⁵ By writing these in story form she hoped to bring the message of Buddhism to thousands who would otherwise never read it. These mystical novels were completely different from her equally successful historical romances published under the name E. Barrington.

After the First World War Mrs. Beck decided to make her home in Victoria, B.C. Here, served by her oriental attendants, she continued to write, give lectures and travel intermittently until her death in 1931. She formed a circle, a sort of soiree, which met fortnightly at her home on Mountjoy Avenue, Oak Bay. The house was described in *Twentieth Century Authors* as “a museum of Orientalia set in a secluded and lovely English garden” and in the *Canadian Bookman* as “part and parcel of Asia, with its gold coloured rooms, its Japanese paintings, its Oriental drapings and inscriptions, its Chinese cups and trinkets” and adds “verily mystery has claimed her for its own.”⁴⁶ A similarity to the Maltwoods’ collection of Oriental treasures and museum like homes is suggested. That Mrs. Beck chose to live in Victoria, where the Maltwoods visited her in 1921, and that the character Brynhild Ingmar was depicted as a Canadian are interesting preludes to the Maltwoods’ later move to Victoria.

As with Katharine Maltwood the influence of Eastern mysticism had led Mrs. Beck to believe the Western explanation of life and death were inadequate. They had allowed the spread of materialism and appeared incapable of forestalling some unimaginable catastrophe. Only by turning to Eastern thought, especially that concerning the evolutionary life of the soul, could the danger be averted. Mrs. Beck was personally a staunch adherent to Buddhism, a strict vegetarian and severely abstinent in her way of life. One of her publishers described her impatiently as not only esoteric and an ascetic but also a martinet, imposing her habits and beliefs on her immediate circle.⁴⁷

Katharine Maltwood never clearly stated her religious beliefs but it appears she endorsed the views of Lily Adams Beck. Also like members of the Buddhist Society in England she closely sympathized with the original tenets of Theosophy and the expositions of Madame Blavatsky, believing all faiths originated from an ancient Wisdom-Religion of which the Eastern philosophies were the purest descendents. Being suspicious of the Movement’s later psychic digression she never became an active member of the Theosophical Society, although she subscribed to their journals and later had several articles published in them. On the whole it appears she preferred to

remain independent in her studies and beliefs in Eastern philosophy and this independence was most probably the result of the momentous significance she attached to her proclaimed discovery of the Glastonbury Zodiac in 1925.



M964.1.364
Mirage
by Katharine Emma Maltwood, 1927



M964.1.363
The Path of Enlightenment
by Katharine Emma Maltwood, 1929

Katharine Maltwood's Kensington Studio, c1922



Footnotes

- ¹ Gillian Naylor, *The Arts and Crafts Movement* (London, Studio Vista, 1971), p. 12.
 - ² *Ibid.*, p. 26.
 - ³ Maltwood Museum and Gallery, *The Maltwood Collection opening exhibition*, Introduction by Martin Segger (University of Victoria, Maltwood Museum and Gallery, 1978), p. 5.
 - ⁴ Katharine Maltwood's copy of William Morris, *The Earthly Paradise* (London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1907), is now in the Maltwood Collection.
 - ⁵ A detailed discussion of Peladan and his activities is given by Robert Pincus-Witten, *Occult Symbolism in France* (New York, Garland Publishing Inc., 1976).
 - ⁶ Chris Mullen, *G.F. Watts: A Nineteenth Century Phenomenon* (London, The Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1974) Illus. 41.
 - ⁷ Harold Begbie, "Master Workers: George Frederick Watts, O.M.," *Pall Mall Magazine*, Feb. 1904, pp. 165-71.
 - ⁸ Gillian Naylor, p. 117.
 - ⁹ Walter Crane, "On revival of design and handicraft with notes of the work of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society," *Arts and Crafts Essays* (London, Garland Publishing Inc., 1977), p. 12.
 - ¹⁰ *The Maltwood Arts and Crafts collection*, catalogue for an exhibition (University of Victoria, 1978), p. 4.
 - ¹¹ Alphonse Legros was Slade Professor of drawing at University College, London, 1876-92. Jules Dalou was teacher of modelling at South Kensington School of Art, 1877-80.
 - ¹² Edmond Gosse, "The New Sculpture, 1879-1894," *Art Journal*, 1894, p. 138ff.
 - ¹³ Charles B. Ingham, *Education in Accordance with Natural Law* (London and New York, Novello and Co. 1902), p. x.
 - ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
 - ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.
 - ¹⁶ Gertrude A. Ingham, *Spiritual Law and Human Response* (London, John M. Watkins, 1953).
 - ¹⁷ D.J. Foxon, *History of Moira House, a Progressive School* (Sidney, Webb College), p. 10.
 - ¹⁸ *The Shuttle, Centenary Number 1875-1975* (Eastbourne, Moira House, Spring 1975), p. 11.
 - ¹⁹ Stuart Macdonald, *History and Philosophy of Art Education* (London, University of London Press, 1970), p. 269.
 - ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 270.
 - ²¹ Auguste Rodin, *Art by Auguste Rodin*, Trans. Romilly Feddon (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), p. 47. Katharine Maltwood's annotated edition is now in the Maltwood Collection as is her copy of Camille Maclair's popular book on Rodin of 1905.
 - ²² The Maltwood Papers, Letter from John Maltwood to Jannette Jackson, Aug. 12, 1962.
 - ²³ Critical reviews of Mrs. Maltwood's sculpture are among the clippings in the Maltwood Papers which are housed in the Special Collections Section, McPherson Library, University of Victoria.
 - ²⁴ Freeman Champney, *Art and Glory: the Study of Elbert Hubbard* (New York, Garland Publishers, 1968), p. 153.
 - ²⁵ *The Maltwood Papers*.
 - ²⁶ *The Maltwood Papers*, Letter from John Maltwood to Mary Caine, 26 June, 1962.
 - ²⁷ Richard Buckle, *Jacob Epstein: Sculptor* (London, Faber and Faber Ltd., 1963), p. 63.
 - ²⁸ Eric Gill, *Eric Gill: Autobiography* (New York, Biblo and Tanner, 1968), p. 262.
 - ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.
 - ³⁰ Katharine Maltwood owned a copy of H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* (Los Angeles, The Theosophical Co., 1925).
 - ³¹ The annotated edition in the Maltwood Collection is Edward Schuré, *The Great Initiates; Sketch of the Secret History of Religions*, Trans. by Fred Rothwell (London, Rider, 1912).
 - ³² Among the numerous books are:
Sir Rabindranath Tagore, *Fruit-Gathering* (London, MacMillan, 1916).
Lewis Spence, *An Encyclopaedia of Occultism; A compendium of information on the Occult Sciences, Occult Personalities, Psychic Science, Magic, Demonology, Spiritualism and Mysticism* (London, G. Routledge, 1920).
William W. Atkinson, *A series of Lessons in Raja Yoga by Yogi Ramacharada* (London, L. N. Fowler, 1917).
Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *The Philosophy of the Upanisads* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1924).
Margaret E. Noble, *Myths of Hindus and Buddhists* (London, Harrap, 1913).
- The periodicals include:
The Modern Mystic and Monthly Science Review; The Occult Review; Theosophia; The Theosophical Forum; The Theosophical Movement; Buddhism in England.
- ³³ Philippe Jullian, *Dreamers of Decadence* (London, Pall Mall Press Ltd., 1971), p. 30.
 - ³⁴ Harold Speed, *The Practice and Science of Drawing* (London, Seeley, Service & Co., Ltd., 1913), p. 22.
 - ³⁵ Sir William M. F. Petrie, *The Arts and Crafts of Ancient Egypt* (London, T. N. Foulis Ltd., 1923), p. 8.
 - ³⁶ H. Fehcheimer, *Die Plastik der Agypter* (Berlin, Bruno Cassier Verlag, 1920), rear cover.
 - ³⁷ Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (London, Luzac & Co., 1927), p. 110.
 - ³⁸ Lily Adams Beck, *The House of Fulfilment* (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1927), pp. 41-42.
 - ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.
 - ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 58.
 - ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.
 - ⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 81.
 - ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 110.
 - ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 110.
 - ⁴⁵ The Maltwood Collection contains copies of all the Lily Adams Beck novels.
 - ⁴⁶ W. M. Fawcett, "Who's Who in Canadian Literature: Mrs. L. Adams Beck," *Canadian Bookman*, IX, 12 (December 1929), pp. 276-77. J. Kunitz and H. Haycroft, eds. *Twentieth Century Authors: A Bibliographical Dictionary of Modern Literature* (New York, H. W. Wilson Co., 1942), p. 27.
 - ⁴⁷ George Doran, *Chronicles of Barabbas* (New York, Harcourt, Bruce & Co., 1935), pp. 314-15.
 - ⁴⁸ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *The Idylls of the King, The Holy Grail*, 1870.
 - ⁴⁹ David Cecil, *Visionary and Dreamer. Two Poetic Painters: Samuel Palmer and Edward Burne-Jones* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 109.

- 50 Katharine Maltwood, *The Enchantments of Britain or King Arthur's Round Table of the Stars* (Victoria, Victoria Printing and Publishing Co., 1944), p. 81.
- 51 Katharine Maltwood, "The Discovery of a prehistoric zodiac in England." *The Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada* (Sept. 1943), p. 272.
- 52 There are almost one hundred ordinance survey and other maps remaining in the Maltwood collection along with illustrations of the Dendarah zodiac from Egypt, the Javanese zodiac and several other ancient and modern astrological charts.
- 53 Katharine Maltwood, "The Discovery of a Prehistoric Zodiac in England.", pp. 273-274.
- 54 Harwood Steele, "The Somerset Giants." *Country Life* (Jan 11, 1946), p. 67.
- 55 In Freemasonry it is believed that God vouchsafed their Grand Master and Archangel, King Solomon, with a knowledge of forms in their original perfection, so that his Temple was the Temple of God. It resembled more the work of the supreme architect of the universe than the labour of mankind.
- 56 Katharine Maltwood, *King Arthur's Round Table of the Zodiac* (Victoria, Victoria Printing and Publishing Co., 1946), p. 34.
- 57 Katharine Maltwood, *The Enchantments of Britain or King Arthur's Round Table of the Stars*, p. 96.
- 58 In addition to those already cited Mrs. Maltwood produced the following books:
A guide to Glastonbury's temple of the stars: their giant effigies described from air views, maps, and from "The High History of the Holy Grail" (London, The Women's Printing Society Ltd, 1934).
 A revised edition of the above was published by Victoria Printing and Publishing Co. in 1950. It was also published posthumously in 1964 by James Clarke and Co. Ltd., London.
Air view Supplement to a guide to Glastonbury's temple of the Stars (London, John M. Watkins, 1937).
Itinerary of "The Somerset Giants" abridged from King Arthur's Round Table of the Zodiac (Victoria, Victoria Printing and Publishing Co., updated).
- 59 For instance, she tried in vain to enlist the support of members of The National Trust, The Royal Astronomical Association and The Royal Society of Arts.
- 60 See for instance:
 Anthony Roberts, ed. *Glastonbury, Ancient Avalon, New Jerusalem* (London, Rider & Co., 1978). This book contains twelve articles by various authors. Colin Wilson in the "Afterward" writes: "As the reader will have discovered, the majority of contributors to this book accept Mrs. Maltwood's ideas."
 Oliver Reiser, *This Holyest Erthe* (London, Perennial Books, 1974). Reiser discusses Mrs. Maltwood's theories and feels they require further investigation and substantiation but that for the present she has "lifted the mantle of invisibility."
 John Michell, *The View over Atlantis* (London, Sphere Books Ltd., 1973). Michell believes that for many people the Glastonbury zodiac is "aesthetically correct" but that for the time being it must be accepted as "a poetic rather than a scientific truth."
 Mary Caine, *The Glastonbury Zodiac, Key to the Mysteries of Britain* (Devon, Torquay, Graef Communications, 1978). Mrs. Caine follows Mrs. Maltwood's ideas closely and adds several elaborations and refinements of her own.
- 61 Among the books on Freemasonry consulted by Mrs. Maltwood are:
 Douglas Knoop, *The Genesis of Freemasonry* (Manchester, University Press, 1947).
 Manly Palmer Hall, *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry* (New York, Macoy Pub. and Masonic Supply Co., 1924).
 George E. Robuck, *An introduction to Royal Arch Masonry* (London, Rider & Co., 1931).
 John S.M. Ward, *An Outline History of Freemasonry* (London, Baskerville Press, 1974).
 Periodicals include: *Freemasonry Universal* and *The Speculative Mason*.
- 62 William Stradling, *A Description of The Priory of Chilton-Super-Polden and its Contents* (Bridgewater, Geo. Awbrey, 1839), p. 1.
- 63 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- 64 *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
- 65 Mary Caine, *The Glastonbury Zodiac, Key to the Mysteries of Britain* (Devon, Torquay, Graef Communications, 1978), p.5.
- 66 The portrait appeared in *Studio Magazine*, Vol. 39 (1907), p. 157.
- 67 *The Maltwood Papers*, Letter from John Maltwood to Mary Caine, June 26, 1962.
- 68 *Ibid.*
- 69 For instance among her book on furniture she referred to: George O. Wheeler, *Old English Furniture from the 16th to the 19th Centuries: A Guide for the Collector* (London, L. U. Gill, 1909).
 Percy Macquoid, *A History of English Furniture* (London, Collins, 1919).
 John Gloag, *British Furniture Makers* (London, Collins, 1946).
The Maltwood Collection Opening Exhibition, p. 13.
- 71 *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- 72 "The Thatch was a dream," *The Daily Colonist*, July 4, 1965, p. 3.
- 73 Katharine Maltwood was great friend of Diana's father, Bob Drabble and his sister and frequently visited them at their family home in Derbyshire. When Bob married and moved to British Columbia Katharine became a god-mother to his daughter, Diana.
- 74 Many of the stones Katharine Maltwood used in her Victoria works were acquired for her by Diana's husband, Stuart S. Holland, Chief geologist for the Department of Mines, Victoria.
- 75 *The Maltwood Collection Opening Exhibition*, p. 11.
- 76 "Emily Carr", *Coasts, the Sea and Canadian Art* (The Gallery Stratford, 1978), n. pag.
- 77 Ian M. Thom, *W. P. Weston* (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1980), p. 12.
- 78 *The Maltwood Collection Opening Exhibition*, p. 9.
- 79 Ian M. Thom, op. cit., p. 12.
- 80 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 81 P.G. Konody, "C.J. Collings," *Apollo* Vol. I (June 1925), p. 345-49.
- 82 M. Tippet and D. Cole, *From Desolation to Splendour* (Toronto, Clarke Irwin, 1977), p. 74.
- 83 *The Maltwood Collection Opening Exhibition*, p. 11.
- 84 Here, aside from traditional painting and drawing courses, a wide variety of subjects were offered including clay modeling, pottery, design, illustration and nature form.
- 85 She took on many of the burdens of operation in the early days of the Little Centre and the Arts Centre. Later with the gift of the Spencer Mansion in 1951 and the establishment of the present gallery she helped, with Hildegard Wyllie, by serving on the board of directors and as a member of the accessions committee.
- 86 Colin D. Graham, *Ina D. D. Uthoff* (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1972).
- 87 *The Maltwood Collection Opening Exhibition*, p. 12.
- 88 "Hildegard Wyllie of Victoria Art Centre would interest Victorians in Gallery," *Victoria Times*, May 12, 1951.
- 89 Mrs. Wyllie later donated these works to the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.
- 90 *The Maltwood Papers*, Letter from Hildegard Wyllie to Katharine Maltwood, July 16, 1950.

- ⁹¹ “Witch at Wheel Performs White Magic with her touch,” *Vancouver Sun*, July 18, 1953, p. 19.
- ⁹² “Paints Island wild flowers in Oriental style.” *Victoria Times*, March 27, 1943, p. 5, mag. sec.
- ⁹³ “Woman Paints Wild Life from jungle to Arctic Wastes”, *Vancouver Sun*, April 11, 1947, p. 16.
- ⁹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁵ “Personality of the Week”, *The Daily Colonist*, Feb. 11, 1951, p. 15.
- ⁹⁶ K. E. Maltwood, “An Appreciation”, Show of Stella Langdale’s work at The Little Centre, Victoria, Nov. 19-Dec. 1, 1946.
- ⁹⁷ “Pure Lyricism Features Stella Langdale”, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Clippings File, April 1951.
- ⁹⁸ Kineton Parkes, “The Aquatints of Stella Langdale”, *Drawing and Design*, No. 31 (November 1922), pp. 227-229.
- ⁹⁹ “Studio-talk”, *Studio Magazine*, Vol. 65 (Sept. 1918), p. 95.
- ¹⁰⁰ “Artist comes to stay”, *The Daily Colonist*, Jan. 28, 1940, p. 3.
- ¹⁰¹ *The Maltwood Papers*, Letter from Stella Langdale to Katharine Maltwood, undated.
- ¹⁰² *The Maltwood Papers*, Letter from John Maltwood to Janette Jackson, Aug. 12, 1962.

Photo Credits

- p.13 *The Wedding of St. George and Princess Sabra* by D.G. Rossetti, The Tate Gallery, London.
- p.18 *Guinevere’s Redeeming* by W.R. Reynolds-Stevens. Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston.
Mysteriarch by G. Frampton, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.
- p.28 *Wind Figure* by Eric Gill, London Transport Authority.
Night by Jacob Epstein, London Transport Authority.
Caryatid or *Angel* by Ivan Mestrovic, Musée National de Belgrade.

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