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The Eye of Revelation: The Ancient Tibetan Rites of Rejuvenation

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The Eye of Revelation

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THE ANCIENT TIBETAN RITES OF REJUVENATION

by

Peter Kelder

Edited

by

J. W. Watt

Booklocker.com, Inc.

2008

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Special Contents
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by
J. W. Watt

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INTRODUCTION

by
J. W. Watt

You are holding in your hands a most intriguing book. It was first published in 1939 by Peter Kelder, a man we know next to nothing about. Mr. Kelder tells a tale of a mysterious British Army Officer, a Colonel Bradford, who located a hidden monastery in Tibet. There the Lamas taught secrets of health and rejuvenation through a simple system of exercise.

If there was ever a monograph destined for the pulp machine of history, this was it. It was a micro printing of a book alleging “impossible” health benefits through a centuries old system of Tibetan exercises. And now, both Kelder and Bradford seem to have been erased from the pages of history. Not an overly believable story, on the face of it.

Yet Kelder’s book survived and now flourishes. Beginning in the late 1960’s, reprints of Kelder’s 1939 edition began to appear.¹ To date more than two million copies of various versions of Kelder’s book have been published. It has been translated into a dozen or so languages and has spawned a companion book, a video, a tape cassette and even a cook book. And a recent Google search on “Peter Kelder” returned more than 40,000 hits.

How can the success of the *Eye of Revelation* be explained? To simply dismiss it would be illogical; people must have been getting results from the Tibetan Rites and telling their friends about it. One has to at least consider the possibility that these exercises actually work, that they really are a “Fountain of Youth”—as incredible as that may sound.

¹ The earliest reprint copy of the *Eye of Revelation* we have found is the 1969 edition published by Borderland Sciences: Peter Kelder, *The Five Rites of Rejuvenation, or, The Eye of Revelation*; Borderland Sciences Research Foundation; Vista, CA; 1969. The Borderland Sciences editions are the only accurate reprints we know of for the 1939 Edition.

It concerned a group of Lamas or Tibetan priests who, apparently, had discovered "The Fountain of Youth". The natives told of old men who had mysteriously regained health and vigor, strength and virility shortly after entering a certain Lamasery; but where this particular place was none seemed exactly to know.

Like so many other men, Colonel Bradford had become old at 40, and had not been getting any younger as the years rolled by. Now the more he heard this tale of "The Fountain of Youth" the more he became convinced that such a place and such men actually existed. He began to gather information on directions, character of the country, climate, and various other data that might help him locate the spot; for from then on there dwelt in the back of his mind a desire to find this "Fountain of Youth".

This desire, he told me, had now grown so powerful that he had determined to return to India and start in earnest a quest for the retreat of the young-old men; and he wanted me to go with him. Frankly, by the time he had finished telling me this fantastic story I, too, was convinced of its truth, and was half-tempted to join him, but I finally decided against it.⁸

7(...continued)

philosophies with the traditional Tibetan Buddhism. The suggestion is that Colonel Bradford's lamasery was not traditionally Tibetan.

8 Kelder states he was "half tempted" to join Colonel Bradford in his quest for the mysterious Tibetan Lamasery. This suggests that it was financially feasible for Kelder to make the journey, and that he had the free time to take it had he wanted to. It also suggests that he had a background which qualified him for such an

(continued...)

Soon he departed, and I consoled myself for not going with the thought that perhaps one should be satisfied to grow old gracefully; that perhaps the Colonel was wrong in trying to get more out of life than was vouchsafed to other men. And yet -- a Fountain of Youth!!! What a thrilling idea it was! For his own sake I hoped that the old Colonel might find it.

Months passed. In the press of every-day affairs Colonel Bradford and his "Shangri-la" had grown dim in my memory, when one evening on returning to my apartment, there was a letter in the Colonel's own hand-writing. He was still alive! The letter seemed to have been written in joyous desperation. In it he said that in spite of maddening delays and set-backs he actually was on the verge of finding the "Fountain". He gave no address.

It was more months before I heard from him again. This time he had good news. He had found the "Fountain of Youth"! Not only that, but he was bringing it back to the States with him, and would arrive within the next two months. Practically four years had elapsed since I had last seen the old man.⁹ Would he have changed any, I

8(...continued)
arduous journey.

9 There is some confusion in the time-line for Colonel Bradford's absence. Kelder states that he did not hear from his friend for months after he left for India. However, later we learn that it must have taken Bradford approximately two years to find the monastery.

Yet Kelder said that it had been only "months" since last seeing his friend when he received a letter from Bradford saying he "was on the verge of finding the
(continued...)

wondered? He was older, of course, but perhaps no balder, although his stoop might have increased a little. Then the startling idea came to me that perhaps this "Fountain of Youth" might really have helped him. But in my mind's eye I could not picture him differently than I had seen him last, except perhaps a little older.

One evening I decided to stay at home by myself and catch up on my reading, maybe write a few letters. I had finally settled down to comfortable reading when the telephone rang.

"A Colonel Bradford to see you, sir," said the desk clerk.¹⁰

"Send him up," I shouted. In a short time a rap was heard on the door. I opened it in haste. For a moment I stared, and then with dismay I saw that this was not the Colonel Bradford I was hoping to see, but a much younger man.

Noting my surprise he said, "Weren't you expecting me?"

"No," I confessed. "I thought it would be an old friend of mine, a Colonel Bradford."

9(...continued)
'fountain.'"

Then more "months" pass and Colonel Bradford writes that he is ready to return, and he will arrive in about two months. Yet Kelder says that it has been nearly four years since he has seen his friend. It appears that whenever Kelder used "months" without a modifying number, he used it to mean "many months."

¹⁰ The presence of a desk clerk strongly suggests that Kelder was living in a hotel.

"I came to see you about Colonel Bradford, the man you were expecting," he answered.

"Come in," I invited.

"Allow me to introduce myself," said the stranger, entering. "My name is Bradford."

"Oh, you are Colonel Bradford's son," I exclaimed. "I have heard him speak of you so often. You resemble him somewhat."¹¹

"No, I am not my son," he returned. "I am none other than your old friend, Colonel Bradford, the old man who went away to the Himalayas."

I stood in incredulous amazement at his statement. Then it slowly dawned upon me that this really was the Colonel Bradford whom I had known; but what a change had taken place in his appearance. Instead of the stooped, limping, sallow old gentleman with a cane, he was a tall, straight, ruddy-complexioned man in the prime of life. Even his hair, which had grown back, held only a trace of gray.

My enthusiasm and curiosity knew no bounds. Soon I was plying him with questions in rapid-fire order until he threw up his hands.

¹¹ The mention of Colonel Bradford having a son strongly suggests he was, or had been, married.

"Wait, wait," he protested, laughingly. "I shall start at the beginning and tell you all that has happened." And this he proceeded to do.

Upon arriving in India the Colonel started directly for the district in which lived the natives who had told of "The Fountain of Youth". Fortunately, he knew quite a bit of their language.¹² He spent a number of months there, making friends with the people and picking up all the information he could about the Lamasery he sought. It was a long, slow process, but his shrewdness and persistence finally brought him to the coveted place he had heard about so often, but only half-believed existed.

Colonel Bradford's account of what transpired after being admitted to the Lamasery sounded like a fairy tale. I only wish that time and space permitted me to set down here all of his experiences; [*sic*] the interesting practices of the Lamas, their culture, their utter indifference to the work-a-day world. There were no real old men there. To his surprise the Lamas considered Colonel Bradford a quite novel sight, for it had been a long time since they had seen anyone who looked as old as he. The Lamas good-naturedly referred to the Colonel as "The Ancient One".

"For the first few 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 my eyes beheld. I soon felt much better, was sleeping like a top

¹² Colonel Bradford knew "quite a bit of their language," an indication that he must have spent considerable time in India.

every night, and only used my cane when hiking in the mountains.

"About three months after I arrived I received the biggest surprise of my life. In fact, I was quite startled. It was the day I entered for the first time, a large, well-ordered room which was used as a kind of library for ancient manuscripts. At one end of the room was a full-length mirror. It had been over two years since I had last seen my reflection, so with great curiosity I stepped in front of the glass.

"I stared in amazement, so changed was my appearance. It seemed that I had dropped 15 years from my age. It was my first intimation that I was growing younger; but from then on I changed so rapidly that it was apparent to all who knew me. Soon the "honorary title" of "The Ancient One" was heard no more."

A knock at the door interrupted the Colonel. I opened it to admit a couple of friends from out of town who had picked this most inauspicious time to spend a sociable evening with me. I hid my disappointment and chagrin as best I could, and introduced them to Colonel Bradford. We chatted together for a short time, and then the Colonel said, as he arose:

"I am sorry that I must leave so early, but I have an appointment with an old friend who is leaving the city tonight. I hope I shall see you all again shortly."

At the door he turned to me and said, softly, "Could you have lunch with me tomorrow? I promise, if you can do so, you shall hear all about the 'Fountain of Youth'."

We agreed as to the time and place and the Colonel departed. As I returned to the living room, one of my friends remarked,

"That is certainly a most interesting man but he looks awfully young to be retired from Army service."

"How old do you suppose he is?" I asked.

"Well, he doesn't look forty," answered my friend, "but from the experiences he has had I suppose he must be that old."

"Yes, he's all of that," I replied evasively, and deftly turned the conversation into another channel. I thought it best to arouse no wonderment regarding the Colonel until I knew what his plans were.

The next day, after having lunch together, we repaired to the Colonel's room in a nearby hotel, and there at last he told me about "The Fountain of Youth".¹³

"The first important thing I was taught after entering the Lamasery," he began, " was this [*sic*]. The body has seven centers, which, in English, could be called Vortexes. These are kind of magnetic centers. They revolve at great speed in the healthy body, but when slowed down -- well, that is just another name for old age, ill-health, and senility.

13 In a previous note, we discussed a clue that Kelder may have been living in a hotel. That Colonel Bradford also had a room at a nearby hotel suggests that they were in a metropolitan area.

“There are two of these Vortexes in the brain; one at the base of the throat; another in the right side of the body opposite the liver; one in the sexual center; and one in each knee.¹⁴

“These spinning centers of activity extend beyond the flesh in the healthy individual, but in the old, weak, senile person they hardly reach the surface, except in the knees. The quickest way to regain health, youth, and vitality is to start these magnetic centers spinning again.

“There are but five practices that will do this. Any one of them, especially the first, will be helpful, but all five are usually required to get glowing results. These five exercises

14 In the 1939 edition of the *Eye of Revelation*, Kelder included this sentence in the preceding paragraph, but **bolded** the type. Here in the 1946 edition he places it in a separate double indented paragraph, probably because the 1946 edition was a typewritten manuscript in which he wasn't able to bold type.

The point is this: It is perfectly clear that Kelder was emphasizing this sentence describing the locations of the vortexes. He considered it very important. *Yet this information was deleted from most later editions!*

One publisher, in their earliest editions, added a footnote explaining that they revised the locations of the chakras or vortexes to conform with the more widely held view about chakra locations. In fact, only four of the classic chakra positions agree at all with the Tibetan vortexes. Right from the start, some publishers were making Kelder's work a subset of yoga, even going so far as making recommendations for finding classes.

While this may be good marketing strategy since yoga practitioners are likely to be interested in the Five Rites, it is not faithful to Kelder's intent. Kelder never mentioned yoga, and most certainly would have had he wanted to. While there may be similarities between yoga and the Five Rites, it is a mistake to prejudge them as just being another form of yoga. Maybe they are, maybe they aren't—we just do not know, yet.

are really not exercises at all, in the physical culture sense. The Lamas think of them as 'Rites', and so instead of calling them exercises or practices, we too, shall call them 'Rites'."

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