In 1883 Leadbeater met an old school friend who had become the captain of a vessel of the British India Steam Navigation Company, and was told a curious story. In 1879 this man had been the second officer on a steamer which carried Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, a remarkable Russian woman who had been the co-founder of the Theosophical Society, from Bombay to Calcutta, and he had met her. HPB, as she was almost universally known to disciples and enemies alike, startled the second officer which two phenomena for which he could offer no natural explanation. First, she struck a match and lit a cigarette in a howling gale, and, second, she accurately predicted that he would be appointed a captain when they reached Calcutta. Leadbeater was naturally interested in these stories, but he had not previously heard of Theosophy, and had no idea of how he could contact this mysterious lady. [1]

But later in 1883, by one of those strange coincidences that Jung called synchronicity, and Leadbeater would later attribute to the Masters, he received a catalogue of secondhand books, which included The Occult World by A.P. Sinnett. [2] Leadbeater ordered the book and read it with interest. The book was dedicated to "the Mahatma Koothoomi", and included chapters on occultism and
CONTINUED

ON

FICHE 2
CONTINUED
FROM
FICHE 1
the adepts, the Theosophical Society, the teachings of occult philosophy, and an account of the phenomena, including the materialization of a cup and saucer, which had occurred in the presence of H.P.B.[3]

The book began with a remarkable claim:

There is a school of philosophy still in existence of which modern culture has lost sight[4]

and commented tantalizingly:

The whole edifice of occultism from basement to roof is so utterly strange to ordinary conceptions that it is difficult to know how to begin an explanation of the contents.[5]

It presented a clear direction to those who wanted to pursue the path of this "utterly strange" philosophy:

...the Theosophical Society remains the one organization which supplies to enquirers who thirst for occult knowledge a link of communication, however slight, with the great fraternity in the background which takes an interest in its progress, and is accessible to its
founder.[6]

The book also made references to the letters A.P.Sinnett had received from the Mahatmas, or Masters, implying that communication with them by quite ordinary means, and without the need for moving tables or seance rooms, was possible.[7]

Leadbeater was fascinated, and eager to join the Theosophical Society. Reading Sinnett's account of H.P.B. he was more inclined to believe the stories, having had what he believed to have been "strong first-hand evidence" of her phenomenal powers from his friend. He was anxious to know more about her. He did not then have the benefit of all the biographies, passionately favourable and violently hostile, which were subsequently written.[8] A remarkable woman whatever one may think of her, HPB cannot be summarized in a few words. Much of her life remains, as she would no doubt have wished it, surrounded by controversy and mystery.

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891) was born at Yekaterinoslav in the Ukraine on July 30, 1831, the daughter of Colonel Peter Hahn. She received no regular education. On July 7, 1848, she married General Nikifor Blavatsky, Vice-Governor of Erivan, and some twenty years her senior. The history of this marriage and its subsequent ending is
uncertain, but it seems that HPB left the General after little more than three months to begin a career of travel and adventure, the history of which is even less certain. Her early life, like that of Leadbeater, was described as "mysterious" - a time of secret occult development according to her pupils, and a time of partially hidden debauch and immorality according to her detractors. Separating fact from fantasy is difficult; her own accounts are not always consistent and her disciples and her enemies vie with one another to produce exciting explanations.

It does seem certain, however, that around 1858 she was converted to spiritualism whilst in Paris, where she met Daniel Home.[9] She returned to Russia briefly before continuing her travels, including, if one believes the story, a time in the home of the Masters, Tibet.[10]

She arrived in the USA in 1874. Spiritualism was then coming in to fashion, and the fashion was nowhere apparent than at a farmhouse in Vermont, where the Eddy family had established themselves as practitioners of the mysterious arts.[11] Amongst those investigating the phenomena was Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907), an expert on agricultural chemistry and a lawyer, who was writing on spiritualism for the New York Daily Graphic and HPB's meeting with him on October 14, 1874, marked a change of
direction in her previously random wanderings. [12] The Colonel and HPB eventually settled in New York, where HPB married again (bigamously, one presumes, since General Blavatsky was still alive[13]) for reasons connected, so she said, with her karma.

In the same year the Colonel, a rank attained in non-combatant service during the American civil war, published People From the Other World, and he received a letter from the mysterious "Brotherhood of Luxor".[14] This was but the beginning of a long series of occult communications. In September, 1875, HPB suggested the establishment of a Society for the discussion of things occult and psychical, and the Theosophical Society was born. [15] Its original object was:

...to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe, [16]

and by 1878 this had expanded to:

...to acquire an intimate knowledge of natural law...to develop [man's] latent power...exemplify the highest morality and religious aspirations...to make known among western nations...facts about oriental religious
philosophies...disseminate a knowledge of that pure esoteric system of the archaic period, and, finally, and chiefly, to aid in the institution of a Brotherhood of Humanity...of every race. [17]

By 1881 the objects had been revised to virtually what they are today:

1. To form the Nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity.
2. To study Aryan literature, religion and science.
3. To vindicate the importance of this enquiry and correct misrepresentations with which it has been clouded.
4. To explore the hidden mysteries of Nature and the latent powers of Man, on which the Founders believe that Oriental Philosophy is in a position to throw light.[18]

The birth of the Society encouraged the writing of HPB's first major literary effort, the two volumes of *Isis Unveiled*, subtitled "A Master Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology".[19] It was published on September 27, 1877, the two volumes sweepingly titled, "I. Science", and "II. Theology". It received
generally bad reviews, but criticisms—and suggestions that
the work had been largely plagiarized—did not deter a
small but growing band of disciples coming to sit at HPB's
feet in "The Lamasery", as the residence she shared with
Colonel Olcott in New York was called. In July, 1878, HPB
became an American citizen, and in January, 1879, she and
the Colonel arrived in London.

The Theosophical Society established its English
headquarters in Great Russell Street, near the British
Museum. Within a few weeks HPB and the Colonel departed for
India, and, on May 25, 1880, in a temple in Ceylon, both
took pаниl, that is, became Buddhists. [20] The following
year A.P.Sinnett's book The Occult World was published in
London, and attracted further interest in the Theosophical
Society and its founders. [21] Seeking a world headquarters
for the new Society in the mystic east, HPB and the Colonel
purchased Huddlestone's Gardens, a twenty-seven acre estate
in Adyar near Madras. Thereafter, they departed from India
early in 1884, and returned to London via France.

The Theosophical Society, although theoretically
free from doctrine and working for research and the
promotion of brotherhood, quickly developed its own
philosophical bases, essentially deriving from HPB's
writings and teachings. These, of course, were said to have
their origin in the "Ancient Wisdom", underlying all
religions, and in the teachings of the Masters or Mahatmas,
advanced Beings with access to information and sources of
knowledge denied to ordinary men and women in the world, who
constituted the Inner Government of the World. These Beings
were said to sometimes select pupils in the world for the
purpose of reviving knowledge of the Ancient Wisdom, and HPB
was proclaimed, initially by herself and later by her
disciples, to be one such person. She produced teachings and
messages supposedly coming from the Masters; letters were
received by various of her colleagues and acquaintances
purporting to be communications from the Masters. The origin
of such messages was the centre of great controversy in
HPB's lifetime, and throughout the later history of the
Society.

Although the teachings of Theosophy developed and
changed even within Blavatsky's lifetime, certain key themes
appear to have remained constant, and continued even in the
versions of Theosophy presented by later teachers, like
Leadbeater. These included monism (as opposed to dualism),
an oriental concept of emanation and evolution (and eventual
re-absorption into the divine) rather than creation and
continuing separation of the creation from the creator, with
life perceived as manifesting in and evolving through forms
including the mineral, vegetable, animal and human. The
manifestation and evolution of life was believed to occur through many lifetimes (that is, reincarnation), in different forms, on different planets, and in different races and civilizations. Present manifestations are the consequence of previous lives; this is usually described as the working of karma, a law of the universe in which cause manifests in effect. Forms of life manifest on a number of planes of existence, of which the physical is but one. Man exists, and has "bodies" which function on other planes.

The evolutionary scheme presupposes higher and lower, or more advanced and less advanced, manifestations, including human beings. High in the evolutionary scheme are the Masters or mahatmas, some of whom constitute a spiritual government of the world, and may become teachers or gurus to pupils in the world. The founders of all the great world religions, which are seen, in varying degrees, to express spiritual truth, or Theosophy, were Masters. Theosophy, or the "ancient wisdom", is understood to be less a religion, in the conventional sense of something to be believed in, than to be a science, that is, a system stating the facts of the nature of the cosmos. It has traditionally been revealed either by Masters to their pupils, or by those whose spiritual development has led to the opening of spiritual (or what would probably be called, outside Theosophy, psychic) faculties of perception. [22]
However, in 1883, Leadbeater knew little of Theosophy, and still less of HPB and her Masters. Sinnett concluded *The Occult World* with the suggestion that those who found interest in what he had written should join the Theosophical Society (known, in keeping with the penchant for initials, as the TS). But he gave no address to which prospective members could write. His reference to a branch in London was equally unhelpful since the Post Office directory contained no reference to it. Leadbeater enquired of his friends, but none of them had any knowledge of the Society.

However, some time later Leadbeater journeyed to Scotland to gather more evidence of second-sight amongst Highlanders and, whilst staying at a hotel, he came across a small pamphlet published by a spiritualist group which included an announcement about the London Lodge of the Society. It mentioned that the President of the Lodge was Dr Anna Kingsford (1846–1888), and that she was the wife of a West Country vicar.[23] Leadbeater immediately wrote to Dr Kingsford seeking information, and received a printed pamphlet in reply.

It was some time before I received a reply, for, as it transpired afterwards, Dr Kingsford was away
on the continent for a holiday; and even when it arrived it proved only to be only a printed circular - very beautifully printed, however, with much of silver about it. But it gave me the information I wanted - the address of the Secretary in London, and it further told me that in order to join the Society I must be proposed and seconded by two members.[24]

Leadbeater responded by writing to the Secretary, Mr Kirby, saying that he did not know any members of the Society who could nominate him, but he wanted to join.[25] After a considerable delay, Kirby replied suggesting that Leadbeater might call upon Mr Sinnett or a Mr G.B.Finch, so Leadbeater immediately wrote to Sinnett, who suggested he go up to London to visit him.[26]

Leadbeater was appropriately impressed by the Theosophical author, whose work the two men spent much time discussing. But an obstacle lay in the way to Leadbeater's membership of the Society:

The more I heard of Theosophy the more anxious I became to learn all that could be told to me; but when I spoke of joining the Theosophical Society, Mr Sinnett became very grave and opined that that
would hardly do, seeing I was a clergyman. I wondered why the Society should discriminate against members of the cloth; and at last I ventured timidly to put the question. Mr Sinnett replied: "Well, you see, we are in the habit of discussing every subject and every belief from the beginning, without any preconceptions at all; and I am afraid that at our meetings you would be likely to hear a great deal that would shock you profoundly."[27]

Leadbeater reassured Sinnett on that point, recalling his investigations into the supernatural, and mentioning that he had already attended some of Mrs Annie Besant's lectures at the Hall of Science in London. Mrs Besant was not at that time a member of the TS, which she joined in May, 1889, but was already a controversial speaker on unorthodox themes, and from 1874 onwards had been lecturing on Free Thought, sectarianism, rationalism, socialism and atheism.[28] Leadbeater suggested that he thought it unlikely that any members of the Society could say anything that would shock him. He assured Sinnett that he was "that kind of clergyman". Sinnett "partially thawed", and then suggested that they would have a "peculiar pleasure" in admitting a clergyman to membership, but that the matter would have to be considered by the Council. So Leadbeater returned to his
parish to await their decision.

Within a week the reply came. The Council agreed to his admission and Sinnett was prepared to nominate him, and suggested that he call upon Mr Finch who would, in all probability, be prepared to second the nomination. Thus Leadbeater was duly nominated and seconded, and finally accepted. And he then received notification that his initiation would take place at Mr Sinnett's residence, and attended the house on February 21, 1884. His application of membership was dated November 20, 1883, and the record of his membership kept by the London Lodge noted that he had been elected to membership on December 16 of that year.[29] His entry was number 2530 on the roll of members kept by the Recording Secretary at Adyar.

Leadbeater's initiation into the TS took place in distinguished company: Professor William Crookes (1832–1919) and his wife were initiated on the same occasion, and their distinguished presence greatly impressed Leadbeater, who knew Crookes as the discoverer of thallium, the inventor of the radiometer, and the "apostle of radiant matter".[30] Crookes was also noted as an investigator of psychical phenomena, in which area he achieved a marked degree of controversy.[31]
The occasion of the initiation was a solemn one:

To join the Theosophical Society in those days was a somewhat formidable undertaking. We found Mrs Sinnett's drawing room crowded to excess, the assembly was in fact overflowing on to the landing and a little way up the stairs. I suppose there may have been some two hundred people present, including some who bore very distinguished names - such as Professor Myers, C.C. Massey, Stainton Moses and others. We three were planted together upon a sofa in the midst of the crowd, and Mr Sinnett after delivering a homily upon the objects and works of the Society, duly communicated to use a series of signs and passwords by means of which we were able to recognize our fellow members in any part of the world.[32]

Thereafter Leadbeater attended almost all meetings of the London Lodge, usually spending the night with the Sinnetts before travelling by train back to Bramshott. His Theosophical career had begun.

Having now heard of the Masters or Mahatmas, the mysterious beings who were said to constitute the inner group of the TS, Leadbeater was anxious to make contact with
them.[33] In the course of his investigations into spiritualism he had been attending a series of seances with William Eglinton (1857–1933)[34]. Eglinton was a leading exponent of slate writing, a technique popular for a time, in which a sealed slate would have a message written on it during a seance, even though the slate was supposedly inaccessible to human agents.[35] Eglinton had previously provided more spectacular phenomena in the form of levitation and materializations, once being — so it was claimed — "translated" from one room to another during a seance. He had travelled widely during his spiritualist career, visiting South Africa, Scandanavia, Germany and India. In Calcutta he met HPB and Colonel Olcott, although for some reason he later denied this. Eglinton was initially sceptical about Masters and Mahatmas, but became convinced when one of his spirit controls affirmed their existence and instructed Eglinton to work for them. Eglinton had a number of "controls" — Ernest, Daisy (oddly enough, a Red Indian), Abdullal, and others. Eglinton also joined the London Lodge of the TS in 1884.

During one of his seances with Leadbeater, the "control" Ernest mentioned the "Masters of the Wisdom" and Leadbeater immediately enquired further. Ernest said he could take a letter to the Masters, and accordingly Leadbeater wrote a letter to the Master KH (that is,
Koothoomi), one of the better known of the Theosophical Masters, asking the Master to accept him as a pupil. He also enquired whether it was necessary, as Theosophical belief then held, for him to spend seven years of probation in India prior to his acceptance as the pupil of a Master. The letter was placed in an envelope, and sealed; this envelope was then placed in another envelope, with a letter to the spirit Ernest reminding of his undertaking to deliver the letter, and this was placed into another envelope which, with a letter to Eglinton, was placed into yet another envelope and posted to the medium. The seals of all the envelopes were "examined microscopically" by a friend of Leadbeater's to eliminate the possibility of fraud.

By return mail came a letter from Eglinton announcing that the envelope marked for Ernest had duly disappeared. A few days later an envelope addressed in a hand unknown to Leadbeater was delivered at Bramshott. On opening it, he found his own envelope addressed to Ernest, with that name crossed out and his own written underneath it. The seal was intact. On opening the letter to Ernest, Leadbeater found that his letter to KH had vanished and the letter addressed to Ernest had a few words written underneath its original text informing him that his letter to the Master had been delivered, and that a reply might be received. Once again, the seals were intact.
Meanwhile, Leadbeater had plenty to occupy his time. His work in the parish cannot have been demanding for he had begun to work enthusiastically for the TS. Sinnett had been receiving hundreds of letters enquiring about Theosophy, and was unable to answer them. He suggested, in response to Leadbeater's request for some practical work to do, that he take charge of the correspondence. There was not a great deal of literature on Theosophy then available: Mr Sinnett's *The Occult World*, together with HPB's *Isis Unveiled* and Dr Kingsland's *The Perfect Way*. [36] So in response Leadbeater had to write at length in longhand. He had, of course, read all the books available on Theosophy, together with a great many on spiritualism, psychical research and the supernatural. He took the accumulated mass of letters back to his parish; he noted that in the first batch there were four hundred and thirty-seven. Allowing himself only four hours sleep a night, he wrote reply after reply in his neat laborious handwriting. Naturally, these replies occasioned further enquiries and so a large-scale work of correspondence was established. Writing letters on Theosophy occupied most of his time thereafter, but it was work which he enjoyed, and he found it more rewarding than the dull routine of parish life. He possessed a fluent, easy style and considerable skill in communicating the ideas of Theosophy, and settled happily into what was to prove the
beginning of a career as a Theosophical teacher.

But he was still awaiting a reply from KH.
Chapter 5: The Influence of Madame Blavatsky

It was Leadbeater's meeting with Helena Petrovna Blavatsky that really gave impetus to his Theosophical career, and led to his separation from the Church of England. At the time of his first meeting with her the London Lodge was engaged in considerable in-fighting over differences between the doctrines expounded by the President of the Lodge, Dr Anna Kingsford, and Mr Sinnett, the Lodge's actual leader. [1] The formalized orthodoxy which developed within the TS in later years - especially after the publication of HPB's *magnum opus*, *The Secret Doctrine*, - was at this time unknown. Individual teachers tended to present their own interpretations of the rather tenuous "Ancient Wisdom", and it was left to HPB, as the agent of the Masters, to decide which interpretations were acceptable in cases of conflict.

On April 7, 1884, the night appointed for the election of officers of the London Lodge, the disputes between the Sinnett and Kingsford factions developed into open argument. Colonel Olcott presided, and Mr G.B. Finch was elected President, with Mr Sinnett as Vice-President and Secretary, and Miss Francesca Arundale as Treasurer. [2] One of the members of the Council was Sir William Crookes. Dr Kingsford was distinctly angry at having lost the presidency
of the Lodge and the meeting was uncomfortably tense.

The tension was broken by an unexpected arrival:

...suddenly and sharply the door opposite to us opened, and a stout lady in black came quickly in and seated herself at the outer end of our bench. She sat listening to the wrangling on the platform for a few minutes, and then began to exhibit distinct signs of impatience. As there seemed to be no improvement in sight, she jumped up from her seat, shouted in a military command the one word "Mohini" [3], and then walked straight out of the door into the passage. The stately and dignified Mohini came rushing down that long room at his highest speed and as he reached the passage he threw himself incontinently flat on his face on the floor at the feet of the lady in black. Many people arose in confusion, not knowing what was happening; but a moment later Mr Sinnett himself came running to the door, and went out and exchanged a few words and then, re-entering the room, he stood up at the end of our bench and spoke in a ringing voice the fateful words: "Let me introduce to the London Lodge as a whole - Madam Blavatsky." The scene was indescribable; the
members, wildly delighted and yet half-awed at the same time, clustered round our great Founder, some kissing her hand, several kneeling before her, and two or three weeping hysterically.[4]

After some minutes of wild adulation, HPB – thought to be in Paris until her dramatic entry – took over the platform and the meeting, and restored order. She demanded an explanation of the unsatisfactory state of the meeting, and summarily closed it, taking the officers into conference with her privately. The rest of the members departed in what Leadbeater described as a "state of wild excitement". Since Leadbeater had been invited to stay the night with the Sinnetts, he remained behind to witness the discussions between HPB, Dr Kingsford and Sinnett. The situation was finally resolved when Dr Kingsford received an order to establish her own "Hermetic Lodge", while Sinnett took charge of the London Lodge. [5]

After the party retired to the Sinnetts' house, Leadbeater was presented to HPB, and Sinnett told her of Leadbeater's letter to the spiritualist journal, Light, in which he supported and defended the concept of the Masters. [6] She seemed pleased and commented:

I don't think much of the clergy, for I find most
of them hypocritical, bigoted and stupid; but that was a brave action, and I thank you for it. You have made a good beginning, perhaps we may do something yet. [7]

Leadbeater was overawed by her presence, and "listened eagerly to every word that fell from her lips", as a result of which, he reflected in later years, he learnt a good deal. He felt that he had found, if not one of the Masters of the Wisdom, at least one of their close disciples.

The impression that she made was indescribable. I can well understand that some people were afraid of her. She looked straight through one; she obviously saw everything there was in one - and there are men who do not like that. I have heard her make sometimes very disconcerting revelations about those to whom she spoke....Prodigious force was the first impression, and perhaps courage, outspokenness, and straightforwardness were second. [8]

On October 30, 1884, Leadbeater travelled to London to bid farewell to HPB, who was preparing to leave for India on November 1. He stayed the night at the Sinnetts', and that evening was informed by HPB that the
Master DK said a reply to his letter to the Master KH had been sent to him. [9] No doubt Leadbeater had made his correspondence to the Master generally known in the Lodge and HPB would have been aware of it. HPB told him nothing of the contents of the reply, and so on the morning of October 31 he hurried back to Bramshott by train. The promised letter was waiting for him:

Last spring - March 3rd - you wrote a letter to me and entrusted it to "Ernest". Tho' the paper itself never reached me - nor was it ever likely to considering the nature of the messenger - its contents have. I did not answer it at that time, but sent you a message through Upasika [i.e. HPB]. In that message of yours you said that since reading Esot.Bud: and Isis your "one great wish has been to place yourself under me as a chela, so that you may learn more of the truth." "I understand from Mr S." you went on "that it would be impossible to become a chela without going to India." You hoped to be able to do so in a few years, tho' for the present ties of gratitude bind you to remain in this country. [10]

The Theosophical theory at the time held that it was necessary for a pupil or chela to spend seven years during a
probationary period living in India, a country believed not
only to be more spiritual than the materialist West, but
also to be the home of several Masters. [11] Accordingly,
many Theosophists looked to India with great longing, and
wanted to travel to the mystic East. In his letter to
Leadbeater, however, KH declared that it was not necessary
to go to India, and talked about the moral qualities
necessary for acceptance as a chela.

While there seemed to be no special problem with
Leadbeater's morals, the fact that he was a clergyman did
create a difficulty, much as it had done when he had first
applied to join the TS. KH explained:

There is also the collective karma of the caste
you belong to to be considered. It is undeniable
that the cause you have at heart is now suffering
owing to the dark intrigues, the base conspiracy
of the Christian clergy and missionaries against
the Society. They will stop before nothing to ruin
the reputation of the Founders. Are you willing to
atone for their sins? Then go to Adyar for a few
months. "The ties of gratitude" will not sever or
even become weakened for an absence of a few
months if the step be explained plausibly to your
relative. He who would shorten the years of
probation must make some sacrifices for theosophy.
[12]

The envelope in which the letter from KH had been posted bore the postmark "Kensington CX OC 30 84", indicating that it had been posted in Kensington, a district in the west of London, on October 30, 1884. In response to suggestions that it was strange that a letter purporting to come from a Master in Tibet should have been posted not far from the home of HPB in London, it has been explained that the letter "seems to have been sent to somebody in London to post"; the stamp had been put in the bottom right hand corner. Underneath the address, "The Rev'd C.W.Leadbeater, Liphook" had been written an "E", subsequently crossed out, and the word "Hants.\" the standard abbreviation for Hampshire, written.

The reference in the letter to the "dark intrigues" and the "base conspiracy" was to troubles besetting the TS at its Indian headquarters. Christian missionaries, displeased at the spectacle of Englishmen travelling to the orient to sit at the feet of teachers of those religions from which the missionaries sought to make converts, sought to take action against the Society and its founders. Not only were they outraged by the encouragement the TS was giving to the native religions, but also by the
bad publicity (from their point of view) resulting from any acknowledgement by Westerners that oriental philosophies or religions had more than a curiosity value. At this time the East tended to be collectively dismissed as amongst the barbaric and primitive superstitions of African tribes and other uncivilized realms as yet unreached by the British Empire and the accompanying gospel of the Church of England. An interest in bizarre religions in anything other than an anthropological spirit was not only bad for the prospective native converts to Christianity, it was also undignified and politically dangerous.

The missionaries also regarded HPB as a charlatan and a fraud, and, probably worse, immoral. Charges of immorality and fraud followed her throughout her Theosophical career, much as they would later pursue Leadbeater. He, no doubt, saw something of a challenge in being a convert from the Established Church to a very anti-establishment philosophy, though, of course, the TS in 1884 represented only the educated upper-middle classes, and was, in morals and manners, if not in philosophy, very Establishment. The early English Theosophists may have been excited by hints of HPB's immorality and her Bohemian lifestyle, but their public reputations could not allow them to follow her in anything more practical than metaphysics. The Society in its early years was a semi-secret society for
the upper-middle classes, and this certainly added to the indignation of the British missionaries in India. [14]

Filled with enthusiasm and anxious to devote his life to the service of the Masters, Leadbeater hurried back to London the day after he received the letter. He hoped to be able to send a reply to KH via HPB. At first HPB refused even to read the letter, saying that such things were private, but at Leadbeater's insistence she finally did so, and asked him what reply he proposed to make. He wanted to say that he was willing to give up his career in the Church and go to India, to devote himself entirely to the Master's service, but that it would be some three months before his affairs could be put in order to allow him to do so. HPB assured him that, because of her close association with the Master, he would immediately be aware of Leadbeater's reply, and would answer in the near future. For this reason, she warned Leadbeater, he must stay near her at all times until the reply was forthcoming, and not leave her for even a moment. Thus he accompanied her while she donned her coat and hat for a carriage ride, and sat, uncomfortably cramped, beside her huge bulk as they travelled to a meeting in the home of Mrs Cooper-Oakley. [15] Whilst HPB was seated in an armchair before the fire in the Cooper-Oakley's drawing room, casually rolling a cigarette [16], her hand jerked strangely, and a small mass of whitish mist formed on her
palm, condensing into a piece of folded paper. She handed it to Leadbeater, saying: "There is your answer." Despite the curiosity of the assembled group, HPB ordered Leadbeater out of the room to read his note, instructing him to reveal the contents to no-one. The letter read:

Since your intuition led you in the right direction and made you understand that it was my desire you should go to Adyar immediately, I may say more. The sooner you go the better. Do not lose one day more than you can help. Sail on the 5th if possible. Join Upasika at Alexandria. Let no one know that you are going, and may the blessing of our Lord and my poor blessing shield you from every evil in your new life. Greeting to you, my new chela. K.H. [17]

As Leadbeater commented, "In occult terms, to hear is to obey" and he resolved to carry out Master's direction immediately.

HPB left London that day for Liverpool, and Leadbeater spent the day going from one shipping office to another trying to arrange a passage for himself. Eventually he found that the only available passage was on the Messageries Maritime's S.S. Erymanthe, which sailed from
Marseilles to Alexandria. This meant that he had to leave London on the night of November 4th. He hurried back to his Hampshire parish to gather his belongings together, and make the necessary arrangements for his departure. No doubt his uncle was astonished to be informed that Leadbeater was severing all connection with the Church and his family, and leaving England in three days to go to India; he never saw his uncle again. For Leadbeater, the break with the Established Church must have been both painful and extremely exciting.

All his church activities had to be given up; he ceased to be headmaster, choirmaster, Sunday school director, organizer of boys' clubs. He returned to London on December 1, buying his clothes for the tropics, and returning in the afternoon to spend the evening with his two favourite boys. On the 2nd he took his last Sunday services as Bramshott, and stayed up until 3.00 a.m. with the two boys, as he also did after a fireworks display on the 3rd. On the 4th he left Bramshott at 8.16 a.m., and departed from Charing Cross at 9.05 p.m., being seen off by Mohini and Miss Arundale. After a Channel crossing described as "very stormy" he reached France, and boarded a train for Paris. He had not slept since making his decision to follow HPB. After reaching Paris at 6.00 a.m. on the 5th, he left for Marseilles, and boarded the French steamer Erymanthe for
Alexandria.

The voyage through the Mediterranean was rough, but Leadbeater spent his time reading and re-reading *Esoteric Buddhism* [19], commenting in his recollections of the trip, "we were fairly thorough in our studies in those days." Arriving at Alexandria he found the authorities preparing to quarantine all passengers for five days because of rumours of cholera at Marseilles, and he was taken away by the Egyptian officials to some barracks at Ramleh where the passengers were charged a pound a day for what Leadbeater described as "very unsatisfactory accommodation". After several days under very trying circumstances, and alarmed at the prospect of missing HPB and her party, Leadbeater was also to get a letter to the British Consul, who informed him that HPB was waiting for him at Port Said. He eventually arrived on the *Erymanth*, and was met by Mr Cooper-Oakley and taken to the hotel where HPB greeted him enthusiastically, saying: "Well, Leadbeater, so you have really come in spite of all the difficulties." He replied, in correct English manner, that when he made a promise he made of point of trying to keep it. But HPB was pleased with his appearance for less than altruistic reasons: she was returning to India specifically to reply to attacks on her character and the Society by Christian missionaries, and saw it as something of a triumph that she should arrive
accompanied by a clergyman of the Established Church who had become her disciple.

Following directions from the Master, HPB and her group went to Cairo via the Suez Canal. In the course of an uncomfortable and unpleasant journey, partly in a small boat and partly in a train, Leadbeater was the recipient of yet another communication from the Master KH. During the railway journey from Ismailia to Cairo, HPB precipitated a letter from KH with a message for Leadbeater:

Tell Leadbeater I am satisfied with his zeal and devotion.[20]

They stayed for several days in Cairo where HPB, assisted by Leadbeater, found material for use against Mr and Mrs Coulomb, former employees and friends of hers who had made accusations of fraud against her. [21] The Cou'ombs claimed that HPB had sought their assistance in fraudulently producing messages from the Masters by using a cupboard in the shrine room on the TS estate at Adyar. They also claimed to have assisted her in producing alleged manifestations of psychic powers, including appearances of the Masters and letters purporting to come from them.

In May, 1884, the Society for Psychical Research
[the SPR] appointed a committee to investigate the phenomena associated with the TS, and HPB, Colonel Olcott and others appeared to give evidence before the committee in London. In November, 1884, an investigator from the SPR, Richard Hodgson, visited Adyar, interviewed various people, including the Coulombs, and examined the shrine room. [22] He returned to London in April, 1895, to present his report to the SPR, and the committee enquiring into the Theosophical phenomena presented its conclusions at the SPR's general meeting on June 24th of that year. [23] They concluded with regard to HPB:

For our own part, we regard her neither as the mouthpiece of hidden seers, nor as a mere vulgar adventuress; we think she has achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting imposters in history. [24]

Controversy still surrounds the report of the SPR and its conclusions, and the SPR itself has declared these findings - as with all its reports - to be the responsibility of those who produced them. [25]

However, this controversy was still in the future, and no doubt HPB hoped to avoid it by casting
sufficient doubt upon the credibility of the principal
witnesses against her, ably assisted by a clergyman. One
evening, sitting in HPB's room sorting papers, Leadbeater
was startled to notice a figure standing in the room, and
even more startled to be introduced to the figure as the
Master DK. HPB commented scathingly: "A nice occultist! You
will not go far on the path of occultism if you are so
easily startled at a little thing like that." It was
Leadbeater's first meeting with a Master, and marked the
beginning of an association that was to continue for some
fifty years until his death - or so he said.

During their stay in Cairo HPB's party mixed with
both the elegant society of the Egyptian upper classes,
including dinners with the Prime Minister and the Russian
consul, and with the fringes of society where the more
interesting and the bizarre could be found. Leadbeater
witnessed what he described as "many curious phenomena"
constantly taking place around CWL - including the
mediumistic reception of messages, the use of HPB's body by
other entities, automatic writing, the precipitation of
money, paintings, drawings and writings. [26] The closeness
of things psychic gradually faded from the TS, as Leadbeater
noted with nostalgia:

In the early days of the Society messages and
instructions from the Masters were frequent, and we lived at a level of splendid enthusiasm which those who have joined since Madame Blavatsky's death can hardly imagine. [27]

During the few weeks of their voyage, HPB totally transformed and remade Leadbeater's personality, changing him from an "ordinary lawn tennis playing curate - well meaning and conscientious, I believe, but shy and retiring" [28] into a pupil of the Masters. Her methods were "drastic and distinctly unpleasant" he later recalled, but effective. On one occasion she ordered him to carry a chamber pot, complete with its contents, around the deck of the vessel, to the amazement, not to say the horror, of the other passengers as they basked in the morning sun. Whether this was an effective means of tempering him against the influence of public opinion, or merely the manifestation of a rather strange sense of humour on HPB's part, is unclear. [29]

The party eventually left Cairo and journeyed on to Port Said where they embarked on the vessel Navarino. On December 17th, they arrived at Columbo where Colonel Olcott was waiting for them, and were introduced to the leading officials of the Society. Leadbeater had at last set foot in the mystic East. He had come a long way - geographically and
psychologically, and not least of all theologically - from St Mary's Parish church in Bramshott.

But he had only just begun to travel.
Chapter 6: Buddhism and India

Whilst staying in Colombo with HPB and Colonel Olcott, Leadbeater was presented to the leading Buddhist scholar Hikkaduwe Sumangala Thero, High Priest of the Peak and of Galle, and Principal of the Widyodaya Monks College at Naradana. [1] On an earlier visit to Ceylon both HPB and Olcott had made public professions of the Buddhist faith and had been formally received into that religion. Now HPB asked Leadbeater to do likewise:

...she thought that, as I was a Christian priest, the open acceptance of a great oriental religion would go far to convince both Hindus and Buddhists of my bona fides, and would enable me to be far more useful in working among them for our Masters. [2]

Assured by HPB that this would not involve the renunciation of what she defined as "the true Christian faith", the arrangements were made for Leadbeater to be presented to the High Priest for the ceremony.

In the garden of the Buddhist College, Leadbeater repeated the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts of Buddhism in the presence of Hikkaduwe Sumangala Thero, and became a
Buddhist:

I reverence the Blessed One, the Holy One, the
Perfect in Wisdom....
I take the Lord Buddha as my guide.
I take His Law as my guide;
I take His Order as my guide...
(1) I observe the precept to refrain from the
destruction of life.
(2) I observe the precept to refrain from taking
that which is not mine.
(3) I observe the precept to refrain from unlawful
sexual intercourse.
(4) I observe the precept to refrain from
falsehood.
(5) I observe the precept to refrain from using
intoxicating liquors or stupifying drugs. [3]

HPB saw it as a personal triumph, and wrote:

I sent for the High Priest of the Buddhists and
introduced the English parson Theosophist to him;
I proclaimed in the hearing of everyone that he
was to enter Buddhism. He blushed but was not
greatly disturbed, for he had seriously made up
his mind to do it, and in the evening a solemn
ceremony was performed on the shore in the temple of Buddha. The parson Theosophist uttered the pansil (*les cinq préceptes*); a lock of his hair was cut from his head; to become a Buddhist and a novice - I was revenged. [4]

Although Leadbeater may not have interpreted this as a rejection of Christianity, he did write to the Secretary of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament in London resigning his membership, and giving as the reason the fact that he had become a Buddhist. [5]

After a day or two in Colombo, the *Navarino* continued on its voyage and eventually arrived in Madras, after considerable difficulties in landing due to a heavy swell necessitating the use of small boats to put the passengers ashore. As she was being winched off the ship in a chair, HPB used language which Leadbeater recalled "rather surprised even the hardened officials". Eventually they set foot on Indian soil. Thousands of people were present to greet them, including members of the TS and hundreds of local people who regarded HPB as a heroine for her attacks on the local missionaries. HPB's party was transported in a cart pulled by enthusiastic Indians, and travelled to the Hall of Pachiappas College; the latter part of the journey was in car provided by the local Maharaja. Addresses of
welcome were delivered, including one by a Mr Gyanendranath Chakravarti, whose eloquence and charm surprised and impressed Leadbeater. [6] Colonel Olcott and HPB replied to the speeches:

[HPB] began very well by saying how touched she was by this enthusiastic reception, and how it showed her what she had always known, that the people of India would not accept tamely these vile, cowardly, loathsome and utterly abominable slanders, circulated by these unspeakable— but here she became so vigorously adjectival that the Colonel hurriedly intervened, and somehow persuaded her to resume her seat, while he called upon an Indian member to offer a few remarks. [7]

At the end of what Leadbeater described as "almost interminable proceedings", they departed for Adyar, where yet another reception awaited them. [8]

It was on December 21st, 1884, that Leadbeater arrived at the headquarters of the TS at Adyar, an estate which had been purchased by HPB and Olcott on May 31st, 1882. A nominal price of six hundred pounds had been asked since the recent opening of the railway to the Nilgiri Hills, a popular holiday centre for government officials,
had caused property values in Madras to fall. The original estate consisted of some twenty-eight acres, with a main building on south bank of the Adyar river and a number of outbuildings. The estate was covered in rich tropical vegetation, including mangoes, banyan trees and a plantation of casuarinas. In 1883 Colonel Olcott had begun a series of improvements to the buildings. A library building, with an outer wall bearing panels with sculptured elephants' heads, was the first major addition. [9]

The main house, "of the ordinary Anglo-Indian type", provided most of the living accommodation:

When I first saw it, it possessed on the ground floor a square central hall, on each side of which were two comfortable rooms. At the back of the hall was a sort of ante-chamber, evidently intended to be the main drawing-room, which ran almost the whole length of the house and opened out on to a broad terrace overlooking the Adyar River. That room was being used as the office for the Recording Secretary of the Society and the Manager of The Theosophist, and we also kept there our little store of books for sale, out of the nucleus of which has grown the extensive business of the Theosophical Publishing House. As is usual
in India, the whole of the house was covered by a flat cemented roof. [10]

HPB occupied a room constructed for her on the roof, and Olcott lived in one of the pavilions in the garden on the eastern side of the main building. Dr Franz Hartmann occupied the other room in the pavilion. [11] When HPB and her party arrived, the accommodation on the estate was virtually fully occupied, and Leadbeater spent his first few nights on a settee in the Colonel's room. But no inconvenience mattered, for living at Adyar was the fulfilment of a dream for him:

...what it was for me to find myself at last upon the sacred soil of India, among dark-skinned brothers of whom I had heard so much - any one of whom might, for all I knew, be a pupil of one of our holy Masters - all of whom, I thought, must at any rate have been from childhood students of the Sacred Lore, knowing far more about it all than we Westerners could know. [12]

Leadbeater had arrived in time for the annual Convention of the TS for 1884. Each year in December a large gathering of Theosophists met at Adyar, or, in later years, sometimes at Benares, for lectures and meetings. In 1884 the
Convention was held in a huge temporary hall, known as a pandal, with walls and roof of palm leaves. [13] Much of the convention was devoted to discussions about appropriate ways of responding to the allegations of fraud against HPB, charges made by former employees of the Estate, and members of the TS, and propagated by hostile Christian missionaries. Much to HPB's indignation, the Convention decided against the prosecution of the defamers on the grounds that it would bring the TS and its doctrine of the Masters into public ridicule, and, as Olcott argued, resolve itself into a trial of the Esoteric Philosophy and of the existence of the Mahatmas, and, as these subjects are the most sacred, not only to Hindus, but to occultists of all religions....the prospect is shocking to their feelings. [14]

The Convention also heard the Colonel's proposal to erect a Parthenon to house portraits of all the Founders of the World Religions, and listened to speeches from Mrs Cooper-Oakley and Baron Ernest von Weber, President of the German League Against Scientific Cruelty. A Committee was formed, under the leadership of the Colonel, to receive and transmit teachings from the Masters, and the Masters, so the Convention was told, agreed to establish a parallel committee of their own chelas to give out material through

While staying at Adyar Leadbeater saw and heard many things which further convinced him of the reality of the Masters. One night, when sleeping in the Colonel's room, he was woken in the middle of the night by the presence of a tall figure carrying a lantern; this surprised him, since the door of the pavilion had been locked.

I half raised myself in bed, but as I saw that the visitor had aroused the Colonel, who apparently recognized him, I sank back reassured. After a few minutes of earnest conversation the figure suddenly vanished - which was the first intimation to me that he was not an ordinary physical plane visitant. [17]

The Colonel immediately went back to sleep, and Leadbeater did likewise, but the following morning told Olcott what he had seen.

He informed me that the messenger was Djwal Kul - now a member of the Great Brotherhood, but then
the principal pupil and lieutenant of the Master Kuthumi — the same whom I had already seen in the Hotel d'Orient at Cairo, though in this case the light was not strong enough to enable me to recognize him. [18]

And, later, Leadbeater met KH himself on the flat roof of the headquarters building, outside HPB's room. Leadbeater was on the roof, casually looking towards the balustrade running round the edge of the building when the Master materialized in the very act of stepping over the balustrade, as though He had previously been floating through the air. Naturally I rushed forward and prostrated myself before Him; He raised me with a kindly smile, saying that though such demonstrations of reverence were the custom among the Indian peoples, He did not expect them from His European devotees, and He thought that perhaps there would be less possibility of any feeling of embarrassment if each nation confined itself to its own methods of salutation. [19]

Apart from this brief lesson in occult etiquette, KH did not say anything more.
Shortly after the end of the Convention, Leadbeater accompanied Olcott to Burma, sailing to Rangoon on a vessel, the Asia, the captain of which was Leadbeater's old school friend who first told him of HPB. Their visit to Burma was at the invitation of the king, Thebaw III. [20] After their arrival in Rangoon, they set about introducing Theosophy to the Burmese, Olcott lecturing both on Theosophy and on of his specialities, Mesmerism. [21] A sudden urgent telegram from Adyar, announcing that HPB was seriously ill, summoned Olcott back to headquarters, and left Leadbeater to carry on the work. With some trepidation he took the lectures, discussions and meetings, fearing that he lacked the Colonel's "ready wit and facility of exposition".

HPB was gravely ill, and hope for her recovery had largely been given up. However, whilst Olcott was with her at Adyar, one of the Masters visited her, and, as had happened on other occasions, gave her the choice of giving up her work and her old, sick body, or of continuing to do another piece of work for the Masters. She decided to continue her work, and made an immediate recovery, so much so that Olcott felt he could safely return to Burma and continue his work there.

During the period in which Leadbeater and Olcott
were in Burma, three separate branches of the TS were established there, and they toured the country, lecturing and visiting the great Buddhist shrines. They also met with the Chief Abbot of Mandalay, and the Roman Catholic Vicar Apostolic of Southern Burma, Bishop Bigandet. Having been told that the King was an exceedingly bad character, "a debauched tyrant, a monster of vice and cruelty", and that his reason for inviting them was curiosity to see white Buddhists, they cancelled their tour of northern Burma, which was to have included an audience with the King in Mandalay. A planned tour of lower Burma, Assam and Bengal was cancelled when news of HPB's renewed illness came from Adyar, and they hurriedly returned to India.

They arrived to find the Adyar estate in a condition of crisis; although the Convention had decided that no libel action should be initiated against those making accusations of fraud against HPB, there was still considerable dissension amongst the members. Additional dissatisfaction had been aroused over the management of the estate, then totally in the hands of Olcott as President. Olcott and Leadbeater reached Adyar on March 19th, and by the 21st the situation had deteriorated to such a condition that HPB resigned her position as Corresponding Secretary and prepared to return to Europe. She sailed from India on the 31st, accompanied by Dr Hartmann, and never returned.
The popular rumour that she was a Russian spy — which had followed her for years — was given credence by this move, and her enemies immediately spread abroad the story that she was fleeing because of imminent war in Afghanistan. [22]

Olcott, alarmed by the dissension and controversy, decided to change the form of administration of the Society, and appointed an Executive Committee which, with him, would govern it. Amongst the eight members were two Europeans, Leadbeater, who acted as secretary, and Mr Cooper-Oakley. The Committee operated for several months, but eventually faded away.

In May, Olcott left for another lecture tour, visiting various centres in southern India. Leadbeater remained at Adyar, filling the office of Recording Secretary

principally because it allowed me to stay in the centre of the movement where I knew that our Masters frequently showed Themselves in materialized forms. [23]

He also looked after the book depot, and acted as manager of The Theosophist in succession to Damodar, who left Adyar on February 23rd to travel to Tibet at his Master's command,
and was never seen again. [24] Leadbeater discovered that his predecessor had "lived entirely on higher planes [so] that he had actually had no time for the physical" and had therefore neglected the more mundane duties of his administrative office, leaving huge piles of unanswered correspondence.

Leadbeater settled down to the task of organizing the chaos, answering the letters, and fulfilling the other, rather dull duties of his new work. He eagerly anticipated the appearance of the Masters, for whom he had travelled to India. It was not a long wait.
Leadbeater had, albeit quietly, entered upon a Theosophical career that was to take him to the heights of stardom within the Society, and the depths of notoriety outside it. Altogether the life at Adyar was a lonely and uninteresting one as he struggled with the business responsibilities of Recording Secretary and manager of The Theosophist office. [1] Mr Cooper-Oakley, for whom he had already developed a distinct dislike, was the only other European on the estate, and they had little contact with one another.

We lived an almost ascetic life, there being practically no servants, except two gardeners and Manikam the office boy....every morning as I rose I put a large supply of crushed wheat into a double saucepan, so arranged that it would not burn. Then I swam in the Adyar River (it was cleaner in those days) for half an hour or so, and then returned to find my wheat nicely cooked. Then the aforesaid office-boy led a cow round to my verandah and milked her on the spot into my own vessel, bringing me also a bunch of bananas from the estate when there happened to be any. I then consumed half the wheat, leaving the other half
for a second meal about four o'clock in the afternoon or when the cow came round again, and then I warmed up the wheat and dined sumptuously thereon. The Adyar budget was probably simpler that period than it has ever been since. [2]

The monotony and boredom of this solitary existence were broken, so Leadbeater later claimed, by a visit from the Master KH, and this visit marked the beginning of the psychic powers and communication with the Masters for which Leadbeater was best known and which established him as a Theosophical authority.

It should be understood that in those days I possessed no clairvoyant faculty, nor had I regarded myself as at all sensitive....One day, however, when the Master Kuthumi honoured me with a visit, He asked me whether I had ever attempted a certain kind of meditation connected with the development of the mysterious power called kundalini.[3] I had of course heard of that power but knew very little about it, and at any rate supposed it to be absolutely out of reach for Western people. However, He recommended me to make a few efforts along certain lines, which He pledged me not to divulge to anyone except with
His direct authorization, and told me that He would Himself watch over those efforts to see that no danger should ensure. Naturally, I took the hint and worked away steadily, and I think I may say intensely, at that particular kind of meditation day after day. I must admit that it was very hard work and sometimes distinctly painful, but of course I persevered, and in due course began to achieve the results that I had been led to expect. Certain channels had to be opened and certain partitions broken down. I was told that forty days was a fair estimate of the average time required if the effort was really energetic and persevering. [4]

After continuing the effort for forty-two days, and feeling himself to be on the brink of victory, Leadbeater was again visited by KH who

...performed the final act of breaking through which completed the process and enabled me thereafter to use astral sight while still retaining full consciousness in the physical body—which is equivalent to saying that the astral consciousness and memory became continuous whether the physical body was awake or asleep. [5]
Far from representing the end of his occult training, this proved to be only the first step, leading to "the beginning of the year of the hardest work I have ever known". While he remained in the octagonal room, which he taken over from Olcott, spending most of his day alone, he was visited by several Masters who instructed and trained him in the use of his newly acquired clairvoyance. His principal teacher was the Master DK, with whom Leadbeater later recalled a close association in a past life when the Master had been incarnated as Pythagoras' chief pupil, and Leadbeater had been one of his students. [6] In this lifetime, DK continued his teaching role:

I know not how to thank him for the enormous amount of care and trouble which He took in my psychic education; patiently and over and over again He would make a vivid thought-form and say to me: "What do you see?" And when I described it to the best of my ability, would come again and again the comment: "No, no, you are not seeing true; you are not seeing all; dig deeper into yourself, use your mental vision, as well as your astral vision; press just a little further, a little higher." [7]
The testing and instructing continued for several months, and was assisted on the physical plane by visits from T Subba Row, who came to the TS estate in order to take part in Leadbeater's training. Leadbeater later declared:

In my own case, Madame Blavatsky taught me very much on behalf of the Master, but I was separated from her for some five years and sent out to India when she was in Europe. Consequently, it was impossible for her, except by occasional letters and on the astral plane sometimes, to give me any help. Therefore I was put into the care of Swami T Subba Rao. [8]

Although T Subba Row was originally a favourite of HPB, he broke with the TS after criticisms by European members regarding contradictions between his teachings and those of HPB, and his failure to make Eastern esoteric knowledge available to TS members. It has also been suggested that he left the TS when he discovered evidence that letters purporting to come from the Masters had been forged. [10] After his resignation he still used to visit the TS headquarters, and held private meetings in the homes of various of his pupils, amongst whom were Mr and Mrs
Cooper-Oakley; Mr Cooper-Oakley was a sort of chela to him. It was said that the only people to whom Subba Row would talk about occultism were the Cooper-Oakley and Leadbeater. Subba Row died in June, 1890, of a skin disease which Olcott tried unsuccessfully to cure by mesmerism. A number of his writings were published after his death, and two books had been published during his lifetime. [11]

It is difficult to assess the debt Leadbeater owes to Subba Row, whose written works consisted almost entirely of commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita. [12] However, Leadbeater described him as "our great pandit", and expressed his gratitude to the Master DK and Subba Row equally in his account of his occult training. [13] But it was only after the death of Subba Row, and after the death of Mr Cooper-Oakley, that Leadbeater made these claims, and one is left wondering whether or not there was any relationship between Leadbeater and Subba Row at all. Certainly, their occult teachings as recorded in their written works are not the same and are, in many places, contradictory. [14] And the whole question of Leadbeater's training under the Masters, which is said to have occupied so much of his time during the lonely months at Adyar, is brought into question by his correspondence at the time with Olcott and Sinnett. [15]
Sinnett received letters conveying how miserable, unhappy and lonely Leadbeater was at Adyar, and, although Sinnett had no doubts as to Leadbeater's clairvoyance, and indeed made use of it in later years, he did note that it was only when he returned to London at the end of 1899 that Leadbeater told him of his occult training. [16] Letters from Olcott to Leadbeater also imply that Leadbeater was expressing his unhappiness, and certainly wanted to return to England. [17] Yet one would wonder why a man who had given up everything to go to the Orient to find the Masters, and had found them, and was being trained by them, could be unhappy and miserable whilst receiving this training. Or, for that matter, remain completely silent about it until four years later, when he did return to England.

The year 1885 ended with the annual convention, and in the official photograph Leadbeater appears as one of very few Europeans. From 1886 to 1889 Leadbeater lived in Ceylon at the headquarters of the Buddhist Theosophical Society. Jinarajadasa later suggested that it was "never Theosophical", but consisted of dedicated Buddhists who had very little interest in Theosophy. [13]

Olcott, having seen the opening of the Adyar Library at the beginning of 186, departed on January 27 to undertake a lecture tour on behalf of the Buddhist National
Educational Fund in Colombo. Leadbeater accompanied him, and they stayed with the Buddhist TS on their arrival. The following day they both attended the cremation of a Buddhist monk and were impressed with the efficiency of that method of disposal of the dead. After some weeks in Colombo, they travelled around the island, their journey interrupted by an attack of malaria which forced Olcott to bed, and left Leadbeater to do the lecturing. Olcott recorded in his diary that he had lectured thirty-two times, and Leadbeater twenty-nine in the course of their stay in Ceylon.

Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism* appeared around this time in a new edition of 5,000 copies, and an elementary catechism, *Sisya Bodya*, written by Leadbeater, was published in 2,000 copies. Fund raising for the National Education Fund had been highly successful, and the Buddhist TS and its publication, the *Sandharesa*, had both benefited from the visit. A Buddhist Defence Committee had been established, and a Buddhist flag devised and adopted. The tour achieved what Olcott described as "a fair show of work". On April 26th Olcott departed for Madras, leaving Leadbeater in Colombo as his representative, to supervise what Olcott called "Buddhist (secular) affairs". [20]

The conditions under which Leadbeater lived were far from comfortable and the atmosphere uncongenial.
Jinarajadasa, whose association with Leadbeater began shortly after this time, recalled:

Apart from the want of the congenial atmosphere of Adyar, the purely physical disagreeableness of the living conditions at the place, in Pettah "native town", in one of the most crowded parts, for a European of refined habits, would have made most leave it quickly. Mr Leadbeater had, on the first floor at the end of the building abutting the street, one tiny room to serve as a writing, dining and living room; the tiny bedroom was partitioned off from the verandah by a canvas screen. He certainly had a bathroom to himself, to which he had to descend to the ground floor; but next to it was - not a water closet, for it had no water, nor even the Indian arrangement with a daily "sweeper", but a horrible cesspool cleaned once a year. [21]

On the ground floor there was also the printing press and the meeting hall in which lectures were given from 9.00 p.m. until midnight once a week. Leadbeater received a small allowance from the Buddhist Society, and it provided him with a servant, but
...how small the "subsistence" allowance was can be gauged from the fact that he lived mostly on porridge, bread and bananas, and a little something that passed for milk. Tea and coffee were expensive luxuries. Mrs Sinnett used periodically to send him socks and handkerchiefs.

[22]

Leadbeater travelled regularly into the villages, usually going by night on a bullock cart, and spending days organizing schools and obtaining subscriptions and donations. It was hard and uninspiring work, but it had its occult rewards.

Leadbeater desired to send a letter to his Master (one might wonder why this was necessary, since he claimed to be in regular communication with KH) and to this end he wrote to HPB in London, enclosing his letter to the Master. In her reply, dated June 23rd, 1886, and written from Eberfield in Germany, HPB refused to undertake Leadbeater's commission, and returned his letter saying:

As to the enclosure I really do not take it upon myself to send it. I cannot do it, my dear friend; I swore not to deliver any more letters and the Master has given me the right and privilege to refuse it.
So I have put it aside and send it to you back as I received it. If Mahatma K.H. had accepted or wanted to read the letter he would have taken it from my box, and it remaining in its place shows to me that he refuses it. [23]

Her letter could only have added to the despair and depression that the isolated Leadbeater was experiencing had not there been an additional message of six lines written in blue pencil across the last page of HPB's letter:

Take courage. I am pleased with you. Keep your own counsel and believe in your better intuitions. The little man has failed and will reap his reward. SILENCE meanwhile. K.H. [24]

According to Jinarajadasa, this message was precipitated while the letter was passing through the post. The letter from Leadbeater to KH, which HPB said she had enclosed, was missing. The message — whether precipitated miraculously in the course of the mails or added in some more mundane way — undoubtedly brought hope and renewed enthusiasm to Leadbeater. That he was trying to send letters to KH via HPB suggests that the visitations and visions of the previous year, if indeed they had been a reality, had ceased. Perhaps, thrown from the solitary and occult environment of
Adyar into the squalid and crowded conditions of Colombo, his psychic powers were temporarily stifled. The letter restored his certainty that the Master was still involved in his life, and, more importantly, satisfied with his work. Jinarajadasa later commented:

Five simple words, but what life they must have brought to Mr Leadbeater!...Next after Mr Olcott it was Mr Leadbeater who helped to build up the Buddhist Educational Movement in Ceylon, though the Buddhists seem hardly aware of that even today. Still, if the Master said "I am pleased with you", what mattered what the others did not say? [25]

Isolated from the rest of the TS, Leadbeater's only contact with the movement into which he had so enthusiastically thrown himself came through letters from the Sinnetts, and occasional correspondence with HPB, who maintained his link with London. Mr Sinnett's letters were usually full of gloom and despair at what HPB had done, and what "those people at Adyar" were doing. His pessimism was countered by the more cheerful correspondence from Mrs Sinnett, and the rare letters from HPB. [26]

In addition to the lecturing and organizing,
Leadbeater was also responsible for the editing of The Buddhist. The English Organ of the Southern Church of Buddhism, which began publication in 1888 as a weekly paper costing three rupees for a year's subscription. [27]. The Buddhist contained articles on Buddhism, items of news, and a number of hymns which Leadbeater adapted from Hymns Ancient and Modern, the standard Anglican hymnal of his day. These were, no doubt, intended to compete with the unrevised versions as sung by Buddhist converts to Anglicanism. Leadbeater's versions included:

Glory to Lord Buddha,
Raise the song again,
Glory to Lord Buddha,
King of Gods and men.

Buddha conquered sorrow;
Vanquished is our foe;
On our way rejoicing
Thankful, let us go.

In His path is safety -
In His Law our joy -
Who if we be faithful
Can our hope Destroy.
And:

Come, ye Buddha's people,
Up and let us sing
Hymns of praise and glory
To our Lord and King.
Oft as men exalting
Waft His praise on high,
Deva-hosts rejoicing
Make their glad reply. [28]

These hymns were put to good use in the Buddhist Boys' School which Leadbeater managed. His work in Ceylon was regarded as a great success by Colonel Olcott, who wrote to HPB in March 1886:

Leadbeater is making a good impression on the people...and he will not dream of trying to break off the Buddhists from the T.S. and set up a little kingdom of his own. There was a great crowd here on Saturday evening to hear his experiences. He goes the whole figure for Buddhism and against Christianity. [29]

The Buddhist contained many instances of Leadbeater's newly acquired dislike of Christianity. In one
issue, expressing his delight that the Buddhist festival of Wesak was being properly celebrated in Ceylon, he noted that it was unlike religious festivals in England. These were characterized by

bestial orgies, savage combats and brutal horseplay, and defiling the balmy air with volleys of oaths and indecent language. [30]

And speaking of the increasing number of converts to Christianity, he described it as "the progress of perversion". Since the teachings of this "perversion" were neatly summarized in the Catechism of the Church of England, Leadbeater expressed his contempt for them by burning a Catechism at a meeting of the Galle Branch of the TS. The incident acquired an amount of notoriety, and it was later rumoured that he had in fact burned a Bible, declaring it to be a "pack of lies". [31]

In 1886, Olcott founded, and Leadbeater became first Principal of the Buddhist High School, at 54 Maliban Street in the Pettah district of Colombo. It began with 37 pupils, but through the three years of Leadbeater's leadership both the quality and the quantity of the pupils improved, and they moved to better premises in Prince Street. Opposition from a nearby Roman Catholic School, and
an old regulation obliging schools to be separated by a statutory distance, led to its return to Maliban Street. [32] The High School subsequently developed into Ananda College. [33]

Leadbeater's stay in Ceylon was broken each year by a visit to Adyar for the annual convention of the TS, the 11th Convention being held from December 27th to 30th, 1886, and the 12th Convention from December 27th to 29th, 1887. On August 3rd, 1888, he returned to Adyar to take over the management of *The Theosophist*, but returned to Ceylon the following year to visit a young boy whom he subsequently claimed was the reincarnation of his brother, Gerald, of the "Saved by a Ghost" story. [34] In later years, Leadbeater claimed that he had been told, prior to going to Ceylon in 1886, that his younger brother, atrociously murdered in South America, had been reincarnated as a Singhalese boy. [35] Leadbeater determined therefore to find Gerald in his new body, and psychically examined a number of boys until he found the right one.

This was a thirteen-year-old Buddhist boy named Currupumallage Jinarajadasa, who had been born in 1875 in the "Sinhalese division of the Hindu race, of Buddhist parents". Leadbeater discussed Theosophical matters with the boy, and told him of the two Masters who were especially
interested in the TS and its work. Jinarajadasa decided to follow Master KH, and Leadbeater said this was on the basis of relationships in past lives. Leadbeater employed some of the traditional techniques of spiritualism with his newly discovered protégé — for example, he claimed to have obtained phrases in classical Greek via Jinarajadasa's use of a planchette. [36]

Eventually, in 1889, Leadbeater told Jinarajadasa that his karma necessitated travelling to England to be educated there as a worker in the Masters' service, and for occult training, but he did not tell the boy that he was supposed to be Gerald reborn until some time after they had arrived in England. Following their arrival in England, Leadbeater told Sinnett that the Master's instructions were that the boy was to be educated in England, but that Jinarajadasa was to return to Ceylon after his education; Sinnett commented that he thought Leadbeater had become too attached to the boy to allow him to return to his own country.

Jinarajadasa's parents had strong objections to their son leaving the country, and decided that he should be educated in Ceylon. In later years, Jinarajadasa recalled his own feelings at the time:
What, then, was to be done? There was, of course, only one answer, and that was for me to run away from home. [38]

Leadbeater arranged with the master of a schooner in Colombo Harbour for Jinarajadasa to swim out to his vessel, be picked up and hidden on board until the ship set sail for England via the Cape. Leadbeater was to meet his new pupil in the English Channel. Jinarajadasa planned to do everything so secretly that he could not be traced and so, packing a bag with a few of his possessions, he set out for the boat. He left his bag with a sailor who had been persuaded to take it on board, and swam out to the boat that was to take him to the schooner. On board, he was hidden in the Captain's cabin, and remained there for over thirty-six hours.

Not unexpectedly, there was an alarm on the part of Jinarajadasa's parents when he did not return home. They searched for the boy, and his father, suspecting that Leadbeater was in some way involved in his son's disappearance, threatened him with a revolver, demanding to know Jinarajadasa's whereabouts. After thirty-six hours, however, the family had decided that, if the boy was returned to them, they would allow him to go to England with Leadbeater "with their formal blessing". Leadbeater took the
boy back to his parents, and after he received their blessing, departed with him for England on November 28th, 1889. [39] Olcott and Sinnett had helped to finance the return from Ceylon, after receiving letters from Leadbeater appealing for their assistance. Olcott had replied in March 1889, saying that both he and Sinnett would give Leadbeater twenty pounds on his return, and expressing his regret that Leadbeater could not "get on with those particular races of Asia." [40]

Sinnett had offered Leadbeater a position as tutor to his son, an invitation which had been received coincidentally, or karmically, with the Masters' instruction to take Jinarajadasa to England. Leadbeater and his companion arrived in England at the end of December, and Leadbeater promptly called on HPB to pay his respects, and introduce his pupil. However, apart from this and one other brief formal visit, he had no further contact with her from the time of his return to London until her death. [41] She did send him a copy of *The Voice of the Silence*, a small devotional work of hers published in 1889, and inscribed it:

To my sincerely appreciated and beloved brother,

W.C. [sic] Leadbeater.[42]
Much speculation has been aroused by her mistake in his initials.

In addition to tutoring Denny Sinnett and Jinarajadasa, Leadbeater was also tutor to George Sydney Arundale, the nephew of the leading Theosophist, Miss Francesca Arundale. [43] George was to play an important part in Leadbeater's Theosophical future. Born on December 1st, 1878, in Surrey, he was the son of the Reverend John Kay, a Congregationalist minister. His mother died in giving birth to him, and he was placed in the care of his maternal aunt, Francesca Arundale, and assumed her name. He met HPB very early in his life, and his occult future was indicated by the metal tube which he wore round his neck throughout his childhood: it contained locks of the hair of the Master KH and had been given to him by Olcott at the Master's direction. [44]

For two years Leadbeater and Jinarajadasa lived in the Sinnett's house at 7, Ladbroke Gardens, Notting Hill, London, whilst he tutored Denny, George and Jinarajadasa. Relations between Leadbeater and Sinnett became progressively strained as the older man, formerly the star of the Theosophical galaxy (next, of course, to HPB herself) found himself being dislodged by the younger Leadbeater. Jinarajadasa also maintained that Sinnett had a "strange
defect of character" which manifested itself in an
"ingrained prejudice as to the superiority of Western races
and the inferiority of Eastern races", although it would
seem that Leadbeater shared that prejudice. [45]

Jinarajadasa also recalled that Sinnett developed
a strong antagonism towards HPB and Olcott, and was
unwilling to accept the rigid rules laid down by the Masters
(via HPB). This, it was said, together with his disloyalty
to the founders, HPB and Olcott, had alienated him from the
Masters, and they therefore ceased their long correspondence
with him. [46] Sinnett, however, refused to admit this:

There was in Mr Sinnett a strong belief, which it
was the business of none of us to challenge, that
if ever the Master determined to communicate, He
would do so with him first, and only through him
to others. It would have come distinctly as a
shock to him that Mr Leadbeater, so junior to him
in all Theosophical matters, had received letters,
and not he, Mr Sinnett. [47]

For this reason, Jinarajadasa suggested, Leadbeater did not
make public the letters he had received until after
Sinnett's death.
It may have been that Sinnett finally dismissed Leadbeater as tutor to his son because he saw Leadbeater as an occult rival; it would not be the first nor the last time that a Theosophical leader tried to eliminate competition. However, this theory is contradicted by the fact that Sinnett seemed to regard Leadbeater as a close friend and ally against HPB, and spoke highly of Leadbeater's "wonderful clairvoyant faculties". [48] Other reasons were suggested for Leadbeater leaving the Sinnett's residence and employment. One story claimed that Miss Arundale heard of Leadbeater's "reputation" for immorality with boys, and removed George from his care, encouraging Sinnett to do the same with Denny. [49] This seems unlikely, since Sinnett continued to have Leadbeater as Secretary of his London Lodge of the TS. [50] In fact, Sinnett himself stated that Leadbeater left because he, Sinnett, was financially ruined, Leadbeater found employment on the staff of the Pioneer newspaper through Sinnett's influence. [51]

It remains to be determined why HPB herself seems to have had no time for Leadbeater after his return from Ceylon. She did not admit him to her own Esoteric Section of the TS, and it is said that she would refer to him, when in a less charitable mood, as "W.C. Leadbeater". [52] Certainly, Leadbeater was completely absent from HPB's circle between his return to England in 1889 and her death in 1891. From
being a rising star, sacrificing all to follow HPB to India at the Master's instruction, a chief of whom she had such high hopes, he was now relegated to the supporting role of a small fish in a large esoteric pond, his work in Ceylon ignored, the psychic powers which he said he had gained at Adyar were unacknowledged, and his contacts with the Masters unrecognized.

Except, of course, by Sinnett, who employed Leadbeater as a medium for contact with the Masters, physical letters having ceased to appear. [53] The messages received from KH via Leadbeater conflicted strangely with the teachings of the same Master through HPB. [54] Leadbeater was a member of Sinnett's group of closest disciples, but not of HPB's Inner Group (formed in the Summer of 1890) and he was not one of her pupils. It would seem, indeed, that she had nothing to do with him, although he later claimed to have been both her friend and her pupil. [55]

During this period of Theosophical obscurity, Leadbeater provided for Jinarajadasa's education, while they shared crowded accommodation. Leadbeater worked as a journalist on the staff of the London office of the Pioneer newspaper of India for a time, taught, gave English lessons for foreigners, and did other temporary work. Jinarajadasa
completed preparation for matriculation to Cambridge University via the University Correspondence College. It was a time of hardship and near poverty.

There was a period when his income was so low that he and I lived in a tiny room, for which seven shillings was the rent. It was just enough room for two beds and a table and a couple of chairs, and a box or two and a wash-stand. His considerable collection of books was tied up in bundles and placed under the two beds. I had my classes to attend to and he had his lessons to give or his office to go to. My share was to look after the very modest housekeeping. I recall the day when the only money in hand was one half-penny, although a few shillings were expected in the evening. Fortunately he still had some good clothes left, for it was de rigueur then at the meetings of Mr Sinnett's Lodge, of which Mr Leadbeater was secretary, all should be in full evening dress. There were occasions when his full dress suit and gold watch were pledged with the pawnbroker. [56]

Amongst the interests which Leadbeater seems to have been cultivating at this time was that of "individualizing cats";
this began as the result of his clairvoyant observations of Jinarajadasa's cat, Ji, which his protégé had found when they were living in London. Jinarajadasa used to take the cat to Cambridge with him during term, and Leadbeater claimed to have observed, psychically, the process whereby the cat became "a soul, a tiny baby soul, it is true, but an immortal soul nevertheless" and also to have witnessed the "descent of the Monad, the building of the Individuality in the causal body". [57] In addition to travelling physically with Jinarajadasa to Cambridge, and later, on tours all over the world, Ji also travelled in her astral body, it was said, to visit an eminent Theosophist in Sweden, and to attend Leadbeater's lectures in California. After producing two litters a year, she died in Italy after an operation — "No longer a cat, but a baby soul" — and waited in Devachan — the heaven world — to take birth in human form. [58]

Leadbeater's obscurity and isolation would end, as would the hardship, as the result of a new friendship. At a reception at the London Lodge of the TS in the Sinnett's drawing room in 1890 Leadbeater met Mrs Annie Besant, who had joined the Society on May 21st, 1889, and rapidly became HPB's closest pupil. Neither of them recalled their first meeting with any clarity in later years, and the friendship didn't fully develop until four years later. Whether Mrs Besant was impressed by Leadbeater's resemblance to George
Bernard Shaw - "they wore their beards in the same cut, their noses and ears had a sharp Mephistophelian conformation, and in their eyes was the same quizzical expression" [59] - or whether the attraction was more subtle and psychic, and based on past lives, is uncertain. But, as Mrs Besant's principal biographer has concluded:

Charles W. Leadbeater, the renegade Anglican clergyman, had come into her life, as the central figure this time, and not as a supernumerary. He was to remain a leading character - perhaps the leading character - until the final earthly curtain. [60]
Bernard Shaw - "they wore their beards in the same cut, their noses and ears had a sharp Mephistophelian conformation, and in their eyes was the same quizzical expression" [59] - or whether the attraction was more subtle and psychic, and based on past lives, is uncertain. But, as Mrs Besant's principal biographer has concluded:

Charles W. Leadbeater, the renegade Anglican clergyman, had come into her life, as the central figure this time, and not as a supernumerary. He was to remain a leading character - perhaps the leading character - until the final earthly curtain. [60]