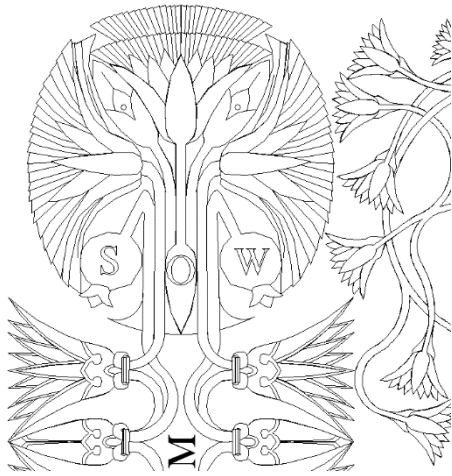


The School of The Wisdom Certificate Symbolism

Joma Sipe, September 2021



“The School of the Wisdom (SOW) was inaugurated in 1949 by C. Jinarajadasa, the fourth International President of The Theosophical Society, to revive the 1922 Adyar School initiated by Annie Besant. This school was named *Brahmavidyā Āśrama*, which has almost the same meaning as the School of the Wisdom.” In the SOW inauguration address Jinarajadasa, wrote:

“The aim of the School of the Wisdom is to enable the individual to cease from being one who gives intellectual adherence to a particular school of philosophy, and become one who learns to survey the problem of life directly by himself or herself...”

The School of the Wisdom aims at bringing each student to survey things “from the centre” which is intuitive awareness... There can be no Wisdom without an ever-increasing sense of Wonder.

The SOW certificate is composed in a lotus flower frame, emphasising the aims highlighted by Jinarajadasa. For example, H.P. Blavatsky says the following about it:

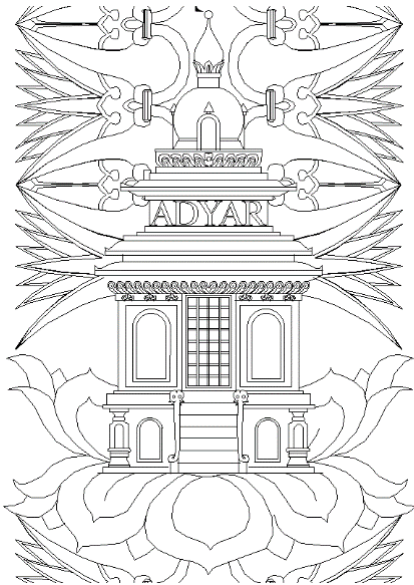
“A most occult plant, sacred in Egypt, India and elsewhere; called “the child of the Universe bearing the likeness of its mother in its bosom”. There was a time “when the world was a golden lotus” (padma) says the allegory. A great variety of these plants, from the majestic Indian lotus, down to the marsh-lotus (bird’s foot trefoil) and the Grecian “Dioscoridis”, is eaten at Crete and other islands. It is a species of nympharea, first introduced from India to Egypt to which was not indigenous.”¹

¹ H.P. Blavatsky, “*The Theosophical Glossary*,” 1892, page 191.

The lotus flowers grow in places where the ancient wisdom has deep roots, such as India, Egypt and Greece. In this manner, in the certificate, they can be symbolically interpreted as the ageless wisdom flowing across different traditions, from the same divine source.

Radha Burnier reminds us that *“The School of the Wisdom is one of the important activities at Adyar, important not only for this place, but for the work of the Theosophical Society as a whole, because it seeks to deepen the level of the participants’ consciousness”*.

The International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, as a physical place, is of major importance for SOW. That is the reason why, apart from the lotus flowers, I have also added in the certificate two of the most important places of Adyar: the Buddhist Shrine and the Zoroastrian Temple.



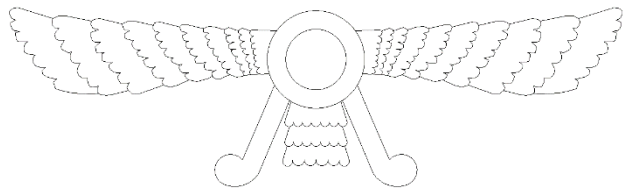
In front of this Shrine, there is a blossoming lotus flower pond.



This Buddhist Shrine was built in 1925, under the direction of Mr C. Jinarajadasa:

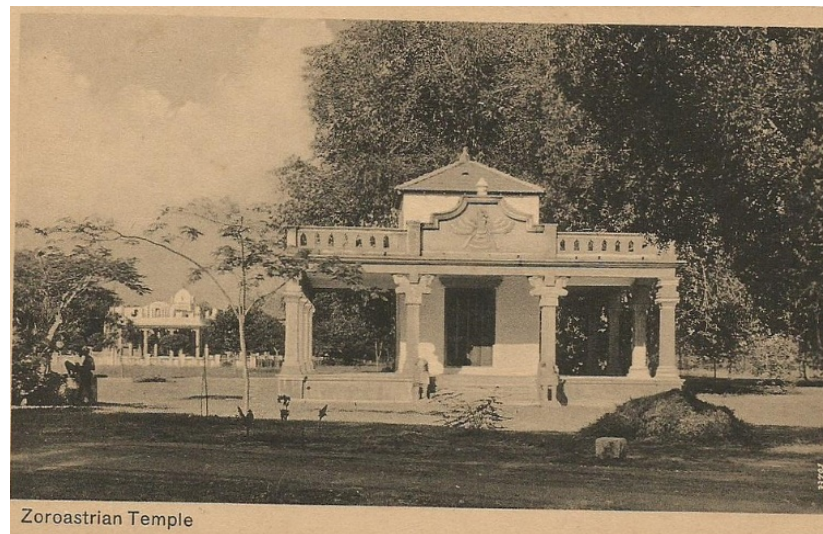
“On February 12, 1883, while Col. Olcott and Alexis and Emma Coulomb were working in the Occult Room, there fell a note from Master K.H. with Rs. 150, and the plan of a sanctuary for a statue of the Buddha with orders to have it constructed. This did not happen until 1925, before the Golden Jubilee Convention. Young Tenzin Gyatso, the XIV Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama travelled to India for the first time in 1956, to celebrate the birth of Gautama Buddha. During their tour, on December 18, they went to the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, Chennai, and visited the Buddhist Shrine. It enshrines a grey sandstone image of the Lord Buddha from Eastern India. This statue, given by Annie Besant, shows the Buddha as the Teacher of Dharma, turning the Wheel of the Law. Around his head is an inscription in Tibetan characters: ‘He taught the cause of all things as also the means of cessation’.”²

² [https://theosophy.wiki/en/Buddhist_Shrine_\(Adyar\)](https://theosophy.wiki/en/Buddhist_Shrine_(Adyar)) and <https://www.ts-adyar.org/content/buddhist-shrine>, consulted September 2021.



This image is a symbol from the Zoroastrian Temple at Adyar. It is a symbolical version of *The Fravahar*, the winged disc, carved in royal places and buildings related

to Zoroastrian philosophy. It symbolises the God Ormazd or Ahura Mazda, represented by the Sun, or *The Light of Lights*, the creative Logos.³



Zoroastrian Temple

“Not far from the Hindu temple is the Zoroastrian shrine.

The figures are Assyrian in origin: the animal-men indicate the Self in the world of form; the kneeling horses at the capitals of the columns signify the mind obedient to the Self; and the winged figure over the entrance is symbolic of the Highest Self, its three-faced nature being represented by the radiating wings and tail.”⁴

³ H.P. Blavatsky, *“The Theosophical Glossary”*, 1892, page 242.

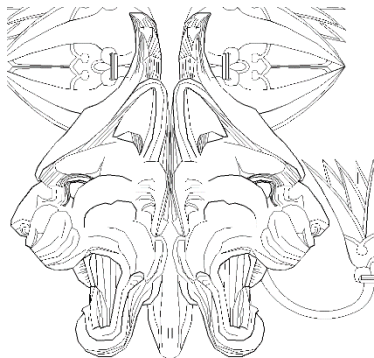
⁴ <https://www.ts-adyar.org/content/zoroastrian-temple>, consulted September 2021.

The Egyptian scarabaeus, is encircled by the lotus flowers frame, at the bottom of the certificate. Blavatsky says the following about it:

“in Egypt, [is] the symbol of resurrection, and also of rebirth. (...) The scarabaeus is the most honoured, as the most frequent and familiar, of all Egyptian symbols. (...) Pierret pertinently shows in his Livre des Morts that the secret meaning of this hieroglyph is sufficiently explained in that the Egyptian name for the scarabaeus, Kheper, signifies to be, to become, to build again.”⁵

In this manner, the scarabaeus may symbolically represent, the ideal process the SOW students should go through, that is *to grow in wisdom*, becoming, building again the link with their higher nature.

The scarabaeus is also holding the Solomon’s Seal, found in the emblem of The Theosophical Society. This is an ancient symbol found in different ancient traditions. In ancient India it was known as *“The Sign of Vishnu.”* Pythagoras, in ancient Greece, said that the triangle is the first and the most mysterious of all geometrical figures. This symbol is also used in the Greek Christian Orthodox Church, by the priest who in blessing holds his two fingers and thumb together, a magic sign, representing the power of the triangle or *“trinity”*.⁶



At the left and right side of the certificate lotus frame, I inserted the Double Lion Head, to represent H.P. Blavatsky, one of the co-founders and influential teacher of The Theosophical Society. I have linked the lion to Blavatsky not

⁵ H.P. Blavatsky, *“The Theosophical Glossary”*, 1892, pages 293 & 294.

⁶ H.P. Blavatsky, *“The Theosophical Glossary”*, 1892, pages 303 & 304.

only because it was her astrological sign, but also, because she was known to have a "*Lion Heart*".⁷ This is also a symbolical reminder that each student should also have a lion heart, be brave, determined. The lion also symbolises strength and excellence.

About

Joma Sipe was born in the city of Porto, Portugal, on August 2, 1974. He spent his childhood in the city of Vila Nova de Gaia, near Porto, where he still lives and has his own studio. He started painting conventional pictures, such as landscapes and portraits, using oils and acrylics with exuberant colors. Eventually he realized that this was not the way he wanted to express his spiritual and artistic feelings. Step by step he became aware of an inner yearning. When he was between thirteen and fifteen years old, he started to feel restless, wanting to discover the reasons for living on this planet, trying to find answers to questions we all ask: "Where do we come from?" "What are we doing here?" "Where do we go after our bodies die?" These thoughtful questions sent him to the local public library in Porto, where he found books written by H. P. Blavatsky and Annie Besant, translated into Portuguese. Soon after reading those books, he felt a deep and inexplicable connection with H. P. Blavatsky and her teachings. He had the opportunity to read *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Voice of the Silence*, and other works by H.P.B. A series of 100 "illuminated" works appears in his book "Soul of Light: Works of Illumination", published by Quest Books, on November 2012. <https://www.jomasipe.com/>

⁷ W.Q. Judge, "*The Path*", vol. VI, n. 3, June, 1891.