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F. F. VON WILMOWSKY,

COUNSELLOR AT LAW,
333 BROADWAY.

Room 2218, 120

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Professor Dr. Nicholas Roerich,
Ursvati Himalayan Research Institute,
India. Naggar, Kulu, Panjab.

Dear Sir:-

Dr. Merrill, the Director of the New York Botanical Garden, after an interview with your son, Dr. George Roerich, last spring suggested to me that I communicate with you about the botanical research of Dr. Walter Koelz in the Himalaya region. I had been doing some work at the Garden regarding a discovery of mine, viz., that the soma plant of the Rigveda was *Salvia Moorcroftiana* Wallich, native 7, to 9,000 feet high in the Indus valley and on the mountains around Kashmir, and my further discovery that that plant is a variety and, probably, the source of *Salvia sclarea* Linne (Muskatellerkraut; Clary; Toute Bonne, Toute Saine, Orvale des Prés), which I had traced back in Europe to about A. D. 1. When I called, I found you and your son absent; I met Mr. Lichtmann, with whom I had a talk about Dr. Koelz' work and also on the subject of Shambhala, of which I had read in newspaper reports of your travels; Mr. Lichtmann told me of the wide range of your research work there.

I had recognized in Sambhala, or thought I recognized, a familiar deity which I had traced from the present day back to the Atharva-veda Hymns X, 7 and X, 8; it is there called Skambha; it appears there for the first time in the Sanskrit literature. Skambha is a philosophical conception; as far as I have found, it stands alone; the Indologists know of no relation or connection with any other deity. The late W. E. Whitney, of Yale, who, with Roth, of Tübingen, translated the Atharva-veda and edited it (some time after Muir), characterised the conception of Skambha as "the frame of the Universe".

In giving you now some present results of my research work my object is to render to you some little assistance in your research there and, perhaps, to suggest some new lines of research along which some positive results may reasonably be expected. I do not give the course of my research, but only a few points of my results.

Etymologically, the name skambha, स्कम्भ, is a noun related to the Old High German words cimin and himil; the German Schimmer, 'glittering'; Schemel 'a low stool'; the Latin scamnum 'a bench', scabellum; the German Schimmel 'something white'; Old High German scimbal, scembel (Austrian-Bavarian Schimpel); German Schemen, 'a ghost, shadow', Old High German scim. Skambha as the personification of the abstract combination of Space and Time - 3 (or 4) + 1 dimensions - is philosophically and poetically dwelt on in the two above cited Hymns. The same conception is found in the later European deities represented with several heads looking in different directions - Porewit, five; Porenut and Swantewit, four; some Old Keltic deities in Gaul, three; the Italian Ianus, two. The greek Krónos like the Iranian Zervan Akarnana represented chiefly abstract Time. Swantewit at Arkona (Rügen) and Riedegost at Rethra on the Lucin-See (Mecklenburg) were forms of the Germanic "Himmel", "the mighty

heavenly domain" personified; surviving in Slavland as the deity on whom the harvest crops depended after the Germanic tribes had migrated west and south. I have little doubt that they were the same deity after which the Kemmel-berg in Flanders was named. "Ach, du lieber Himmel!" "Das weiss der Himmel!" "Hilf, Himmel!" etc, I believe, survivals of the ancient belief in Skambha-Sambhala. "Gott im Himmel!" "Du lieber Gott!" "Ciel!" "Der liebe Gott" of the old Saxons in Westfalia are referring to the same deity under a Christian cover.

Albert Einstein's "Raum-Zeit-Kontinuum" appears to me to be the same very ancient idea and conception that was expressed by the Brahman sage in the two Atharva-veda Hymns. I think the home of the conception is in Kashmir, or in Western Tibet (Ladak), which must have been the home of the Arya for quite a while, before their offspring (Kelts, ΚΙΜΜΕΡΙΟΙ, Kimbri, Teutones) migrated west.

The sanctuaries of the European deity of 'Heaven' were on the tops of mountains having a head toward the east. Its attributes were - besides the plurality of heads - denoting the four "Himmelsrichtungen" and Time - enormous size (Irminsûl on the Eresburg in Saxland, destroyed by Charlemagne; Swantewit); a golden sword (Sahsgenot; ΧΡΥΣΑΩΡ) as the emblem of Lightning; and a "Schimmel", a white horse, as the emblem of the Sun (abbreviated as ☐), ΠΗΓΑΣΟΣ. How much of the ancient conception and its emblems and myths has survived at its source?

Kimin, "Heaven", was blended in Central Europe at an early time with Wōtin and so escaped the savage onslaught of the Christian priests. Wōtin, the Sanskrit Vāyu-Vāta, the Greek ΠΟΤΙΔΑΣ, ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ, originally, the deity of the Wind-storm; and Thōr, the Sanskrit Indra, the ΚΕΡΑΥΝΟΣ ('Thunder-stone or -bolt'), were rivals from olden times; does that rivalry go back to the Indus and to Tibet? Indra Vrtrahan, the Grecian ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ, slayer of the winged Geryonēs ('Roarer'), retained his great thirst in Europe; where did he acquire his propensity for walking over the mountains and for crushing mountain tops? Tibet may give the answer. Indra changed his Sanskrit name in the Ladak region, adopting the Tibetan word for 'stone, thunderbolt', "rdōr". (Is this word related to the Chinese "t'o, 'a heavy stone', Giles, 11,351?)

A different conception or abstraction of the same natural phenomenon has its source in the Sanskrit word "asani, - as it seems, an old Dravida word, aṇani 'thunderbolt, death by a thunderbolt'. It is the source of the Grecian ΑΘΗΝΗ 'a thunderbolt'. The word is very ancient; "asin" is common to all of the Algonkin tribes of North America denoting "a stone". ΠΑΛΛΑΣ denoted a 'meteoric stone'. The ΑΙΓΙΣ, the fiery snake of lightning, is Athēnē's antagonist, like the Iranian Veretra, Aži dahāka, like the Sanskrit Vrtra ahi, ऋक्, Sushna, 'Zischer'. The Grecian 'jātaka' of Athēnē is of Kretan origin, it seems. Are there any traces of a female Thunder-deity in the Himalayas? I believe that Athēnē came to Karia and Kreta and to Greece over the southern route from India, though also over the Black Sea.

It seems that the Tibetans, and the Hindus of the Mahabharata, understand Sambhala to denote a mysterious locality achieved by Tao, 'The Way', somewhat as the Middle Ages conceived the Castle of the Holy Grail (Corbridge on Tyne, with a ΦΑΛΛΟΣ, procession and lanx satura) or the terrestrial Paradise, the Grecian ΕΛΥΣΙΟΝ, the Egyptian 'Field of Aaru (the Alazon river valley, south of the Caucasus, with Early Eastern culture).

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All of these conceptions should have left traces in the myths and the folklore and the ditties and sayings and ceremonies of the Himalayas and of Tibet, if they were ever at home there. Do the 'devil dances' of Tibet reflect any mythological lore? How about the blond tribes of Kashmir and the Hindukush? Research regarding these questions is necessarily local, to be done there. Such research requires not only a speaking knowledge of the languages, Tibetan and Kashmiri, but familiarity with the local dialects and personal familiar contact with both the lamas and the pandits and the lay people, with knowledge of the literatures, both Kandjur and Veda and popular lore. To help in such research, I have disclosed to you these data, which I expect myself to publish in a book when I get more leisure than I have had, with the hope that they will be of aid in your investigation for the survival of ancient Eastern beliefs which have become the subject-matter of our European beliefs, myths, cults, poetry and all the arts.

Believe me,

Yours very respectfully,

F. F. von Wilmsky

P. S. When I told Professor Dr. A. W. Jackson, of Columbia University, in 1928, that I thought that Skambhá of Atharva-veda X, 7 and 8, was the German "liebe Himmel", his answer was: "I don't believe it!"

The Grecian representative of Skambhá, 'Space', was ΑΤΛΑΣ, like the Germanic deity of enormous size. ΑΤΛΑΝΤΙΣ, the abode of Atlas, was identified with the Terrestrial Paradise and with the Country of the Four Rivers (Euphrat, Tigris, Araxes, Vohu or Boas, now Corugh): Armenia.

F. F. von Wilmsky