

evolution, now observationally confirmed, show that all stars with the same general characterisations originated in pretty much the same way from the same kind of cosmic dust and gas, and have evolved in the same time through the same series of stages.

“Moreover, we also know that when stars like the sun are born from a matrix of gas and dust, a planetary system also arises.

“From this it follows that there are in the galaxy millions of planetary systems like our solar system with similar physical and chemical properties.

“Hence life must exist in many of these planetary systems since biochemists have demonstrated that the complex organic molecules necessary to maintain life are synthesized spontaneously if the physical and chemical conditions are proper.”

Flying saucer scare in the Cape

Police called in

The *Flying Saucer Review* is grateful to Mr. Philipp J. Human for having sent the following account which appeared in the *Johannesburg Sunday Times* for May 5.

FOR two weeks there has been a flying saucer scare in the small farming community of Boskloof, eight miles from Clanwilliam, in the Cape.

Groups of farmers — some armed with guns — have been hunting strange lights and poltergeists which have mysteriously appeared on farms in the area.

The scare reached a climax last Saturday night when a group of 80 farmers gathered at the farm of Mr. Herman Nieuwoudt, where a hail of stones was reported to have fallen on one of the farmhouses, occupied by Mr. J. Smit.

When the assembled farmers heard thumps coming from the house, two of them opened fire with their rifles—but the noises continued.

The police have investigated the strange happenings on the farm of Mr. Nieuwoudt. They have confirmed that mysterious noises have come from Mr. Smit's house, but believe there are natural explanations for these noises.

Meanwhile, reports of flying saucers hovering over farms in the area have been coming in from many sources.

Farmers have kept vigil at Mr. Nieuwoudt's farm this week in an attempt to track down the source of these strange phenomena, but so far with little

success.

Mr. E. H. Nieuwoudt, a Boskloof farmer — the Nieuwoudt family of brothers own several farms in the area—believes that the falling stones and the thumps emanating from the Smit farm house are directly connected with the appearance of strange flying objects he has seen hovering over his farm on several occasions.

He said: “The moving object I saw one night looked like a flying saucer. I first saw it just before Easter.

“I thought it was my son putting away our car in the garage, but I soon learned otherwise.

“The object, about 12 ft. wide and 10 ft. high, rose off the ground when I saw it, and went off at terrific speed into the sky, where it hung about for many minutes before flying off towards the plantation near by. Then it disappeared.”

The next evening a Coloured labourer, Hans Bagger, saw an object hovering over the farm. He ran from it in terror. He told the other labourers, who ran out to look at the “strange flying machine.”

Since then, others have seen flying lights.

Mrs. G. E. Nieuwoudt, of another farm on the Jan Dissels River, claims to have seen a flying saucer three times.

She said it looked like the

moon, and she thought it came from “another world.”

Now many people are seeing strange flying objects over the area, and reports are coming in of herds of cattle being frightened by red glowing lights, dogs fleeing in terror because of strange noises coming from various sources, and ghostly figures appearing on several farms.

The nightly pilgrimage to the home of Mr. Smit continues, and the thumps on the roof of the house are continuing.

Sergeant J. A. Jacobs, of the police post at Clanwilliam, visited Mr. Smit's home during the week-end. He reported: “I heard three thumps during the night. Perhaps it was caused by the contraction of the roof when the temperature fell. This could be the explanation.”

Rumours in the area are flying fast. A prominent resident said some people were convinced that they were being invaded by flying saucers from Mars.

“It is the worst scare of this kind I have known in the area,” he said, “and local farmers are certainly taking no chances. They are ready for anything.”

There are no air fields in the area which could explain the nightly lights in the sky, and there have been no reports of meteorological balloons released over the area, which is inland.

A Buddhist Reports from Wu T'ai

By John Rowland

FROM time to time students of unusual and, to orthodox minds, inexplicable phenomena find their material in unexpected places. There have, however, not been as many reports in recent years of strange phenomena from the east as there were in days gone by. It is not easy to say why this is so.

In a recent book by a scholar of Buddhism — an Englishman who has studied this religion in many forms — there is a story which was new to me, and which seemed worth passing on, since I am sure it will also be new to many readers of these pages. The author is Mr. John Blofeld; his book is *The Wheel of Life*, published in 1959 by Riders. It is an autobiographical volume of great fascination, describing an Englishman's path to Buddhism. The author has studied in China, in India, and in other Buddhist countries; he has been initiated into a Buddhist order; and he has stayed in a Zen monastery, as well as in many other places where few Englishmen ever penetrate.

But it is not as a travel book that I wish to write here of *The Wheel of Life*; nor as a valuable and interesting introduction to a religion different from that of the vast majority of us in the West. From either of those points of view the book can be recommended; but not necessarily to readers of this REVIEW. What makes it of immediate interest here is a story told by Mr. Blofeld of something that happened to him when he was staying at Wu T'ai, a sacred mountain in China on the fringe of the Himalayas, where Chinese, Tibetan and Indian Buddhists may meet. Here the English convert stayed at a date which is not quite clear (Mr. Blofeld is a little vague on dates); but it seems certain that it was some time before the outbreak of war in 1939.

It was bitterly cold, and at night the visitors wrapped themselves up in cocoons of blankets, even then having to huddle close together for warmth.

One night they were roused by a shout: "The Bodhisattva has appeared!" For those not acquainted with Buddhist terminology, it might perhaps be explained that a Bodhisattva is a term not easy to define; perhaps "wisdom-seeker" is the best English equivalent; though even then there may be some who would express it differently. At any rate, the shout showed the guests at Wu T'ai that something striking was happening; so they dressed hurriedly and made their way to the window in the freezing cold, with shawls and quilts wrapped around them.

"There," says Mr. Blofeld, "in the great open spaces beyond the window, apparently not more than one or two hundred yards away, innumerable balls of fire floated majestically past."

It was not feasible, he adds, to judge their size, because it was not possible, high up on the slopes of the mountain, to decide how far away these balls of fire might be. "They seemed to be moving," he remarks, "at the stately pace of a large, well-fed fish, aimlessly cleaving its way through the water." Fluffy balls of orange-coloured fire, is the way in which he describes their appearance.

There appear to have been a large number of these; they could not, he said, have been manipulated by human beings, unless it is possible to imagine two or three hundred men all clothed in black and able to swim through space.

The mountain was high; its slope on this side was almost vertical; the balls of fire were at a distance impossible to determine. They must have been, Mr. Blofeld says, at least as large as

footballs; and it would seem that they appeared fairly often, since the residents who lived at Wu T'ai permanently did not regard the phenomenon as anything entirely new. It appeared that this happened from time to time there, and always between midnight and two o'clock in the morning. Why? Was it, as the Buddhists seemed to believe, something in the nature of a manifestation of a force of wisdom? And, if so, why in this particular form? Here again an answer is almost impossible to get; Mr. Blofeld says that "silence is best." But we, in the restless West, so different from the tranquil world of the Buddhist, will feel the need to penetrate into this further.

Someone to whom he told the story suggested to Mr. Blofeld that it might be that these balls of fire were something in the nature of the well-known Will-o'-the-Wisp—bubbles of marsh gas arising from some swamp and being spontaneously set alight as they came into contact with the oxygen of the atmosphere. This, too, seems unlikely. The top of the sacred mountain, where the fire-balls were seen, was a good thousand feet above the nearest really horizontal land; there was no water there, and certainly no swamp. The mountain was solid rock.

There will be some Western commentators who will say that this is a typical piece of Eastern confusion and simplicity. This, I feel, would be a totally unfair criticism. Buddhism, with all its mysteries, is a rational way of life; it has little dogma; it has largely a sceptical way of looking at things. Buddhists are not, on the whole, the sort of people who would be readily taken in by someone who was attempting a "leg-pull" or a piece of faked magic. But if we accept all that, what were the fire-balls? Did