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“Bringing Buddhism to Russia: Madame Blavatsky’s *In the Caves and Jungles of Hindustan*“

The paper examines Madame Blavatsky’s role in popularizing Buddhism in Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century. From her accounts of traveling to Tibet and gaining access to the sacred texts, to her active role in polemics about Buddhism with notable scholars of the time, Madame Blavatsky exerted enormous influence on how Buddhism was received and perceived in Russia. Drawing on her personal accounts, her interactions with influential Russian intellectuals of the time, and especially on her much-acclaimed travelogue “In the Caves and Jungles of Hindustan,” written between 1879 and 1886 and published in the prominent thick journal “Russian Messenger,” this paper shows the importance of Madame Blavatsky in the cultural discourse of the time.