

# THE STORY OF BUDDHISM

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OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

LONDON EDINBURGH GLASGOW NEW YORK

TORONTO MELBOURNE BOMBAY

HUMPHREY MILFORD

1916

PRINTED IN ENGLAND  
AT THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS



सत्यमेव जयते



DEDICATED

TO

E. C. C.

## THE 'GOSPEL' OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA.

'One thing only do I teach—Sorrow and the uprooting of sorrow.  
(*Majjhima Nikāya*, xxii.)

As some poor prisoner in dungeon pent  
From year to weary year is racked by pain,  
Longs for release and cannot find content,  
But ever pines and chafes against his chain—  
So do thou see in each succeeding birth  
A prison-cell of untold misery,  
Seek to shake off all chains that bind to earth  
And from existence evermore be free!

(From the Introduction to the *Jātaka*.)



सत्यमेव जयते



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## INTRODUCTION

BUDDHISM is being eagerly studied in the West, and there is no dearth of books upon it. Yet a brief history of its amazing developments may prove useful in helping those who are not experts to a sane view of it, and to a knowledge alike of its strength and of its weakness.

It is for such readers that this little book has been written: it avoids technicalities as far as possible, and ignores many great problems, seeking to give a simple yet accurate and sympathetic account of the religion of Gautama Buddha and its developments. Six years spent in close contact with the peoples of Burma and Ceylon have convinced me that whatever it may have done in its Golden Age, and strong as its hold still is, the Buddhism of to-day in all its many forms is almost powerless to effect either individual or social regeneration.

I believe that a sympathetic and open-minded study of it and its history will convince the student that this is so, and will send the Christian back to the study of his own religion with a new understanding of it and a new appreciation of its wonderful power to meet human needs and to satisfy human aspirations.

Like each of the other branches of science in turn, and side by side with the psychology of religion, the comparative study of religion—at first hailed as an enemy—has proved

a valuable ally, and has added, or is adding, yet another striking chapter to the great volume of Christian Apologetic.

It is a fact of far greater significance than has yet been realized that Buddhism has in the course of its development adopted just those elements of belief and practice which are essential parts of Christianity ; and has done so in the teeth of the strict injunctions of its founder. With him it was a stoic agnosticism, knowing no Supreme God, repudiating worship and prayer and the doctrine of the forgiveness of sin ; having no room for any scheme of atonement, nor any ideal of a social Heaven. Yet in Buddhist lands these ideas and practices have sprung up ; the aspirations of the human heart have conjured them into being, or, clustering round some faint myth or legend, have moulded it nearer to the heart's desire and given it 'a local habitation and a name'. Everywhere the Buddhist system has failed to meet human needs, and has persisted chiefly because of the un-Buddhistic elements it has absorbed or developed. Buddhism has in fact been forced to make terms with Theism, and exhibits all forms of theistic belief from the pure Amida-cult of Japan to the sensuous polytheism of Tibet.

Because it is important that the layman should have these facts in an available form I am offering him this book, which deals with the only rival religion to Christianity which is really possible to the Western mind.

Not a few men of culture in the West, orphaned in the world of faith, and finding the milk offered them by the sciences thin and a little sour, have sought in Buddhism a *via media*, and are satisfied that they have found it. But these men are Stoics, and as one of them said to me : 'For the great bulk of mankind Christianity is a better religion.'

A few heroic spirits seem able to struggle on alone ; but love makes heroic deeds possible to all.

Some of these Western Buddhists are now busy reviving and purifying Buddhism in Burma and Ceylon, and not without success. Others are preaching it in the West ; and there are urgent reasons why every intelligent man in the West should study it and weigh its claims.

The time has come when no man may call himself educated whose historical knowledge is confined to the shores of the Mediterranean, and whose modern sympathies are limited to the movements of the West. For Asia is awake, and in all history there is no more fascinating chapter than that now being written, 'The Renaissance of India, China and Japan'.

Now Buddhism is closely linked up with all these countries : and even though it is not a vital force in their Renaissance, yet it has played a great part in their history, and scores of millions of their peoples revere the memory of Gautama Buddha as their greatest teacher.

Moreover, the day of the attitude of indifference between East and West has for ever passed : for good or evil their destinies are inextricably intertwined. In ways little realized the East is already mingling with the life of the West, and in ways hardly dreamed of yet she is going to affect the destinies of the younger peoples of Europe and America.

Already she is offering us her religious ideas, bidding us sink our materialism and learn of the great idealist Gautama the Buddha to escape from sorrow and from the 'clinging mesh of desire'. She offers to us one who is still the 'Light of Asia' as the 'Light of the World' and bids us see in

him a teacher more practical and more intellectual than Jesus of Nazareth.

We must study Buddhism then not merely on account of its antiquity—it is 500 years older than Christianity—nor merely on account of its great historic past—it has moulded the destinies of nations, and brought comfort to unnumbered millions—but because it is still a powerful religion, with important bearings upon the modern world.

Furthermore, however much we may admire Gautama, even though we may see in him a forerunner of the Christ, yet for Christians there can be no question of compromise. We may study and sympathize, and yet be ‘lovingly intolerant’ of the claims of modern Buddhism. For though the moral teachings of Buddhism are good and true, its underlying assumptions are largely false. If Buddhism be true, then Christianity is untrue: ‘Our all’, as Athanasius wrote of another great conflict—‘our all is at stake.’

I believe that Christ is the goal of the Buddhist, as of the Jewish, Law : but Buddhism, like Judaism, if it is to find its true fulfilment, must ‘die to live’: it must forgo its most cherished assumptions and acknowledge its failure before it can find the power it is seeking to vitalize it once more, and to give it strength to make the nations live.

For, as Bishop Copleston, late Metropolitan of India, has said, Buddhism is like a man coaching a crew from the river bank, and shouting ‘Now row nicely! Do row nicely!’ Men need more than exhortation. And Buddhism withholds from them the bread of life. Its history is the history of the bankruptcy of agnosticism. As my friend Mr. Stanley Senior has expressed it :

‘Here is a system announced for true and final which

knows no supreme God, no Soul, no Sin, no Saviour, no Forgiveness ; which proclaims these things (the things by which we have strength to live and die) as illusions ;<sup>1</sup> which sees only sorrow and suffering in the universe, and thirsts only for deliverance from the chain of being : whose best doctrine is the non-survival of the fittest ; and which hails fallen and feeble man as his own Saviour !

‘ Buddhism, so regarded, contains within itself the germs of an antagonism to Christianity more serious than the antagonism of Islam, or of any other of the great world-religions, inasmuch as it is a possible rallying-ground of all the agnostic ability and culture of the age : a meeting-place of all for whom humanity and not Deity is the supreme idea.’

And this brings us to the practical issue : our own personal attitude towards Buddhism. Many who read this book may be called upon to spend their lives in one of the great Buddhist countries of the East—in one of the rich possessions which our Empire holds in trust, such as Burma or Ceylon, or in the far East where there is an ever-increasing mingling of the races. May we not avoid the two mistakes so commonly made by Europeans in these lands—supercilious indifference on the one hand, and an unthinking enthusiasm for the religion of Gautama on the other ?

We can at any rate seek to approach the subject with open minds.

I am glad to acknowledge my debt to many writers upon Buddhism, and not least to my colleague, the Rev. W. S.

<sup>1</sup> Whilst this statement is not true of Mahāyāna Buddhism, yet, as we shall see, the essential tenets of Mahāyāna Buddhism conflict with the essential teachings of the founder of Buddhism.

## INTRODUCTION

Senior, who has spent nine years in Ceylon and has contributed to this book some valuable suggestions, and some passages in the first two chapters.

Miss Olive Edis, F.R.P.S., has kindly supervised the making of blocks for the illustrations.

To Basil Yeaxlee I am grateful for generous help in reading proofs and preparing an Index—tasks undertaken in the midst of very heavy work connected with the war.

To Messrs. Skeen of Colombo, Klier of Rangoon, and Burlington Smith of Darjeeling I also owe my thanks for permission to reproduce some of their excellent photographs.

RANGOON,

*Advent*, 1913.



## CHAPTER I

### THE INDIA OF GAUTAMA'S DAY, AND HIS EARLY HISTORY

*'For them, and me, and all, there must be help.'*

WE are accustomed to think of our own age, with its A world-  
widespread social upheavals and the great awakening of the wide  
nations of the East, as a crisis in the world's history. religious  
movement.

A similar crisis makes the fifth and sixth centuries B.C. for ever remarkable. For at this time a great quickening and widening of human thought took place. It was the age of Aeschylus and Pythagoras in Greece, of Jeremiah and Ezekiel in Israel, of Zoroaster, the founder of the Parsi religion, in Persia, and of Laotzë and Confucius in China. All over the civilized world mighty thinkers were thinking great thoughts upon the deep problems of life—'Whence am I? What is my destiny? Above all, how shall I be happy and lead the ideal life?'

Between Greece and Israel on one side and China on the other lies a land in some respects more wonderful than India. they, a land which even the unimaginative may come to love and to reverence.

It is a land of vast snow-capped mountains, of fertile The land  
plains, of great rivers; yet over a great part of it the forces and the  
of Nature seem to be ranged against man's efforts: the people.  
fierce heat beats down un pityingly, terrible droughts drive the people to despair, and in many parts life is one long struggle for existence. Still the patient toiling millions think more of the unseen and spiritual than of the physical.

India is above all a land of spiritual thirst. For the Indian believes in the Divine with a passionate certainty of conviction that nothing can shake : he may for a time turn away, but he always returns to that quest for the Unseen and the Eternal. Yet he has but little joy in his religion ; amidst those vast ramparts of snow Melancholy sits enthroned, and she broods over these endless sun-scorched plains. And beside her sits her sister Fear. Is not life a fearful thing—a thing of disease and endless toil, of sorrow and old age and decay ? Are not all things the prey of Death ?

Their  
religion.

India is pessimist now ; and she was pessimist twenty-five centuries ago. 'An inward uneasiness, a dimly felt lack of harmony with the Heart of the Universe, unknown and inscrutable, weighed her down.' And that Heart she sought with pathetic earnestness to know ; her Brahman priests besought the countless gods, with costly sacrifices and complicated ritual of which they alone know the secret, till gradually they themselves were acknowledged as divine ; her philosophers (sixty-two separate schools are mentioned in an early Buddhist book) dreamed and disputed of the nature of the Soul and God ; and her ascetics hid themselves in cave and jungle, seeking that strange mystic experience which sometimes comes to the man of pure life and rigid self-control, and which is interpreted as the very Presence of God : others more fanatical sought like the priests of Baal to compel the heavens to answer.

These were the 'religious', specialists in the spiritual life : for even in a land where all are religious, the vast bulk of the people has to be busy with the ordinary affairs of life—ploughing and sowing, courtship and marriage, begetting children and rearing them. Yet they, too, were much occupied with the Unseen ; and fear was perhaps the shape which religion took for most of them. Is the world not full of demon-armies which hide in crannies in the

rocks or cast the 'evil eye' upon one's cattle from some haunted banyan-grove, or lurking at the threshold bring sickness and suffering upon the mother and her new-born child? These unseen, ubiquitous, and capricious foes must be propitiated, and the 'gods' themselves, as immoral and no less capricious, must be squared! Truly India in the sixth century before Christ needed a Gospel of hope and comfort. At such a time and to such a heritage was born India's greatest son, one of the greatest men of all time.

In the year 1896 a stone tablet was discovered on the borders of Nepal, the country of the Gurkhas, which marks the spot where Gautama Buddha was born. The birth of Gautama, 560 B. C.

The story has been told and re-told, and the loving imagination of his disciples has played round it and dressed it in elaborate garments of myth and legend, which may be studied in Sir Edwin Arnold's great poem *The Light of Asia*. This is based on a Sanskrit book of about the first century A. D., and can only be regarded as myth with a kernel of fact: though it is to be noted that several of the miraculous elements were very early accepted, and are found carved upon the monuments of King Asoka, the great ruler, who about 350 B. C. set up the pillar in the Lumbini grove to commemorate this great event.

Siddhartha was the son of Suddhōdana, a small chieftain of the Sākya clan,<sup>1</sup> and of the house of the Gotamids. His mother, the lady Maya, died shortly after his birth, and he was tended by an aunt who figures largely in his later life. The little kingdom of Kapilavastu can still be traced; and we may picture the wonderful country in which Siddhartha's early years were spent.

'Between tall forests of sal-trees, yellow rice-fields spread out in uniform richness. . . . Between the rice-fields we

The land of his birth.

<sup>1</sup> According to one theory this clan was of Scythian descent: another makes it pure Indian: a third, very recent, makes it Persian.

may here and there place villages in the days of the Sākyaas such as exist to-day, hidden among the rich dark foliage of mangoes and tamarinds. . . . In the background of the picture, over the black masses of the mountains of Nepal, rise the towering snow-capped summits of the Himālayas.'

It was a fitting home for the warrior-race from which he sprang, a still more fitting home for the seer and poet and thinker he was to be. No young Indian patriot can stand to-day on those spurs of the Himālayas looking upward to that dazzling rampart of eternal snow—'on which if a man looks he shall be blessed', and downward to the spreading fields and clustering hamlets, without feeling his heart stirred within him by a longing to help those toiling millions, those brave men, those patient women, those beautiful little children. So must the young Siddhartha have thrilled with love for his dear native land, with pride in her beauty, with pain for her sorrows.

Yet his father—as Indian fathers will to this day—strove to keep him from the subtle snare of reflection! For the young Indian who thinks so often becomes a dreamer and an idealist, and the old chief wanted his son to succeed him as a warrior-prince, too busy to think overmuch and too practical to dream.

His training.

His days were therefore filled with hunting and the practice of arms, and the Indian ballad-singer loves to recount his prowess in all manly sports—how like Ulysses he beat all his rivals and won the beautiful Princess Yasodharā, none else being able to wield his mighty bow. Very touching is the story of the hunt and of the divine compassion for the stricken deer which welled up in him, a compassion which remained with him and still keeps his memory fresh in millions of hearts who love and revere this quality above all else.

His compassion.

Legend has enshrined too his intellectual skill, and there



### AN 'ORDINAND'

The Candidate for entrance to the Sangha is clad in the garments of a prince before he 'leaves the world', commemorating the going forth of Prince Siddhartha

are many stories which show how deeply he impressed his fellow-countrymen as a thinker; stories of him, in some animal form or in a previous human birth, outwitting those who sought to do him harm. <sup>His wisdom.</sup>

For by the sixth century B. C. India was already obsessed by the doctrine of Transmigration, a doctrine which has never for a moment relaxed its grip upon her, but hangs to-day 'like a pall' over her people. If any of us were to ask an Indian to tell us what it is that most distinguishes Indian from European thought, he would almost certainly reply, 'The doctrine of Transmigration': <sup>The doctrine of transmigration.</sup>

How many births are past I cannot tell;  
 How many yet to come no man can say.  
 But this alone I know, and know full well,  
 That pain and grief embitter all the way.

How this doctrine arose, no one has yet fully explained: and when it will loose its grip upon India, no student of the East would venture to foretell. It is one of the few doctrines—there are only three or four—which almost all Hindus hold in common, and Buddhists for the most part accept it in the same sense, though, as we shall see, philosophical Buddhism has refined upon the Hindu idea.

How would the doctrine present itself to the young Gautama? As a little child his nurse would tell him, if he were untruthful, 'You will be reborn as a serpent with a forked tongue', or, if he so far forgot his Indian courtesy as to slight his Brahman teacher, he would be told of great rocks in the next life which crush a man who speaks rudely to one of higher caste. Wall-paintings of these things in the Buddhist Vihāras of Ceylon, and weird carvings of them on the Pagodas of Burma, bring home the lesson to the young Buddhist of to-day. Again, if a good man were suddenly overwhelmed with misfortune, Siddhartha would

Karma.

hear his parents say: 'It is his Karma. He must have sinned in a former birth'; and beggars and the sick would be accounted for in the same way: some are born prosperous and healthy; it is the result of their former good deeds: some are born to poverty and disease; it is the result of former sins.

Students of Greek philosophy will be to some extent familiar with this thought: but it has laid hold upon India as it never did upon Greece, and the young Gautama could no more avoid thinking in terms of transmigration than an Englishman can avoid thinking in terms of 'good form' and 'sportsmanship', or a Mohammedan in terms of the 'Will of Allah'. Transmigration colours Indian thought much as the idea of evolution dominates that of the West.

As we have seen, Siddhartha's father strove to keep the boy's mind off the deeper things of life, lest he should be bitten by the 'divine madness' of his people and give up all, as so many have done before and since, to seek a way of deliverance. For the idea of transmigration is no mere philosophic theory; it is to the Indian mind a grim and dreadful reality. The greatest service the patriot can render his mother-land is to find a way of salvation. Such a way the young chief was destined to seek, and, as Buddhists believe, to find.

He grew up, we may believe, exquisitely sensitive. We may accept or not as we please the tale of his luxurious home, of his three palaces for the three seasons, and of the soft strains of music and the languorous dances with which his father sought to soothe him into oblivion of the world's pain.

The rift  
within the  
lute.

It is quite certain that there broke in upon his pleasant sensuous days a cry of agony. The pain of India 'laid its cold hand upon his heart'. Legend tells us of three visions—a leper, a very old man, and a corpse—and in later days

a disciple, whose experience had followed that of his master, wove them into a simple and pathetic hymn :

Sickness, and palsied tottering eld,  
Yea, death itself these eyes beheld.  
From such dread thoughts to free my mind  
I left what most I prized behind.

Riches could not satisfy him, nor the loving arms of Gautama's Yasodharā, nor even the pride of fatherhood. He must <sup>renuncia-</sup>tion. 'go forth' and seek a way of escape : and even as he went and they urged upon him the claims of wife and child and showed him the infant Rāhula asleep in the splendour of dimpled limbs and smiling innocence, 'Rāhula a bond !' he cried. 'This is yet another bond that must be cut.' And Buddhism has in this been faithful to him : it sees in married love a snare of the Evil One, and places the celibate life altogether on a higher plane.

Here is a poem in which one of his disciples has expressed his stoical determination to forsake those bonds for ever :

With handmaidens and jewels rare,  
Of womankind surpassing fair,  
Our little boy upon her arm,  
My wife came, seeking me.  
But I, of evil lures aware,  
Beheld in her a subtle snare,  
Designed to do me deadly harm,  
Disguised by Māra's treachery !  
Such bonds have lost their hold on me,  
They chain not him whose mind is free !

So the young chief flung forth from palaces and the delights of home out into the dark ways of the sleeping city. On his white horse Kanthaka—soon to die of a broken heart—

<sup>1</sup> This and following verse translations are from the author's *Heart of Buddhism*.



with Channa his charioteer beside him, he rode through the silent streets to the boundaries of his realm. And there dismissing these faithful comrades he shaved his head and donned the yellow robe of the Seeker.

Here, surely, we may pause and learn of him the great lesson of moral earnestness : ' Earnestness ', he cried in later days—' earnestness is the way of life.'

'The moral purity, the strength of purpose and of will he displayed place this man on a pinnacle apart. If the Queen of Sheba was commended for her toilsome journey to hear the wisdom of Solomon, may we not suppose that the same great Judge of men would much more commend and have us copy the vast earnestness of this Indian Prince?' It was this very earnestness which led him to turn his back upon the gods of his people ; for India had not risen to the conception of a righteous God ; but he did not scorn to sit at the feet of the Doctors. Going first to the Brahmans at Rajagriha, he soon satisfied himself that they had nothing to teach him ; the god they worshipped was not for him. Then along forest-ways he passed into Uruvela, where there was a large community of ascetics, if haply he might find what he was seeking.

Gautama  
as ascetic.

Soon he outstripped them all in his fierce quest, striving so to conquer the flesh that it should become the servant of the spirit, and soon five disciples attached themselves to him, so zealous was his asceticism.

Think of him in those silent forest watchings when night came on and closed him in, fainting and weary with the horror of great darkness, his body starved almost to a skeleton, his mind alert and awake to every sound.

Forest  
vigils.

Such vigils asked no little physical courage, as well as a rare set of the will. For six long years he practised his austerities, until at last there remained but one thing to complete them—to die outright. A wonderful statue exists showing



‘The limits of asceticism had been reached’

us the seeker worn to a skeleton. The limits of asceticism had been reached, he had swooned from hunger and weariness, but he was not delivered.

Never did the courage and sanity of Gautama burn brighter. Asceticism failed him, and forthwith he abandoned asceticism. He took food and was strengthened. At once his five disciples deserted him. He was for them a broken reed, an apostate.

But to us the step is splendid. It shows him a true man, not a fanatic. His asceticism had always been a means, and not an end : he saw a goal beyond. And when the means, tested to the utmost, proved useless, no fear of man, no unwillingness to acknowledge error, deterred him from choosing others.

At this time, it is said, and we can well believe it, Māra, His the Tempter, employed a fierce temptation. In the revolution of feeling at Uruvela, when those six painful years must have seemed worse than wasted, there came stealing into his mind with subtle, poignant force the memories of past joys. The arms of sad Yasodharā were round him once again ; and little Rāhula called to his father's heart. The aged King Suddhōdana, his own father, yearned for his long-lost son. Why should he not return, and as a prince once more forget that forest-nightmare, that misguided quest ?

But the religious instinct in him, stronger than all lures, held him firm. A greater destiny awaited him than that of an Indian Rajah.

An ascetic no more, he turned his steps eastward towards Budh-Gaya, near Benares, disheartened, but not in despair, 'faint, yet pursuing'. The ceaseless meditations of past years could not, after all, prove fruitless. The solution of a baffling problem sometimes dawns with startling suddenness. 'We have toiled all night and taken nothing.' We sleep, and lo ! next day, expecting nothing, we reap returns beyond

all our dreams. When consciousness has grown weary and given up, sub-consciousness, ceaselessly at work, has taken up the tangle, and in a moment, to our wonder and delight, presents us with the long-sought answer, clear and complete and satisfying. Such, we may be allowed to imagine, was the case of Gautama.

His  
enlighten-  
ment.

At the midday heat, or in the cool evening after a day's journey, he sat, as many an Indian recluse has sat, in the shade of a peepul-tree, since that day better known as the Bo- or Bodhi-tree, the Tree of Knowledge, the Tree of the Great Enlightenment.

Fa Hsian, the Chinese traveller, saw it, withered but living, nearly a thousand years afterwards; while a branch of it, carried by Sanghamitta, Asoka's daughter, to Anuradhapura in Ceylon took root, and flourished, and survives to-day, perhaps the oldest, certainly the most famous, of all the trees of Earth. In every Sinhalese village, the Bo-tree, with high-walled roots and gleaming dāgoba beside it, preaches to pious Buddhists an ever-present sermon, which brings the Master near.

'Sitting under the tree . . . he went through successively purer and purer stages of abstraction of consciousness, until the sense of omniscient illumination came over him; in all piercing intuition he pressed on to apprehend the wanderings of spirits in the mazes of transmigration, and to attain the knowledge of the sources whence flow the sufferings of the world, and of the path which leads to the extinction of this suffering.' . . . 'When I apprehended this' (he is reported to have said of this moment) 'my soul was released from the evil of desire, released from the evil of earthly existence, released from the evil of error, released from the evil of ignorance. To the released awoke the knowledge of release; extinct is rebirth, finished the sacred course, duty done; no more shall I return to the world; this

I knew.' Henceforth Gautama Siddhartha was the Buddha, the Enlightened.

What was the solution he had found? In what does his 'gospel' consist?

As he afterwards formulated it, his intuition was fourfold, consisting of the Four Noble Truths. They are a kind of diagnosis of the sickness of the soul based upon current Indian systems of medicine. As there must be a cause for every physical ailment, and as, once this cause is found, the ailment may be cured by its removal, so must it be, argued this physician of the soul, with misery. It is a symptom of disease: if we can discover the disease, we may remove the symptom. Now if the disease is anywhere, it must be in man himself, and therefore he, and he only, can remove it.

The four noble truths.

The symptom of disease, then, is misery;

The cause of it is that clinging to life which all of us have and which Buddhism calls evil;

The cure for misery is to be quit of this desire:

The way to be quit of this desire is to follow certain clearly-marked ways of righteousness—the Noble Eightfold Path.

Our frontispiece (from a wall-painting in a Tibetan Temple) shows in diagrammatic form the essentials of this teaching. The circle represents the weary round of rebirths, each segment depicting life in one of the worlds of men or animals, or in a hell or a heaven. The black Demon is desire or self-will, and if he be destroyed, then the wheel falls to pieces and man is released from rebirth and suffering.

The demon of desire.

At the hub of the wheel are symbolical animals, each clutching one another: the eagle standing for lust, the snake for anger, and the hog for stupidity. These are the 'cardinal vices' of Buddhism—forms in which self-will manifests itself. To get rid of selfish desire, therefore, is to get rid of existence

and its attendant vices and miseries ! And behind self-will is ignorance : salvation is in knowledge. Such in brief is the Buddha's 'gospel'. It has cast a strange spell over Asia, where millions of hearts have found in it comfort and truth. And even in Europe and America it is offered as the panacea of all ills. It is simple and straightforward : 'One thing only do I teach, O Monks,' said the author of it 'sorrow and the uprooting of sorrow.' And it contains much that is of permanent value : 'If there were no self-will,' says a Christian Mystic, 'there would be no Devil and no Hell.' But can self cast out self ? Is suffering the supreme evil ?

Could we preach this 'gospel' to all 'who labour and are heavy-laden' ? Is sin not something worse than ignorance ?

#### THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH : THE BUDDHIST WAY OF HAPPINESS.

(A middle path between austerity and sensuality.)

*Right belief* : i. e. right acceptance of the Four Noble Truths, of the Law of Buddha.

*Right aspiration* : i. e. feelings of benevolence, compassion, &c.

*Right speech*.

*Right action* : i. e. keeping the five or eight precepts : abstaining from murder, theft, adultery, drunkenness, and lying, if one is a layman. If one is a Bhikkhu, he must abstain also from food after midday, from using high beds, and from watching plays and spectacles.

*Right livelihood* : i. e. not making money by harmful means, e. g. by selling slaves or weapons of war or liquor.

*Right effort* : i. e. mental effort.

*Right mindfulness* : i. e. an aware and wakeful state of mind.

*Right contemplation* : i. e. right use of meditation and the serene calmness which follows such meditation.

**ILLUSTRATIVE READINGS**

(From *The Heart of Buddhism*.)

**The Buddha's attitude to the Body.**

This body is a nest of loathly sores,  
A dank and slimy skin doth wrap it round :  
And from a thousand thousand oozing pores  
It sendeth out its stench like an open wound.

**The Kingdom of the Mind.**

Blest is the lesson my teacher has taught,  
For I live in the village, but ever in thought  
I escape to the jungle! No fetters for me!  
For wisdom hath set me most gloriously free!

**The 'Strenuous Life' of Meditation: (a farmer speaks).**

Happy I in freedom blithe!  
Three crooked things are laid aside,  
The plough, the hoe, the heavy scythe:  
There they stand; there let them bide!  
The strenuous life of meditation free,  
This is the life for the likes of me!

**Compassion.**

As, recking naught of self, a mother's love  
Enfolds and cherishes her only son,  
So through the world let thy compassion move  
And compass living creatures every one,  
Soaring and sinking in unfettered liberty,  
Freed from ill will, purged of all enmity.

## CHAPTER II

### THE TEACHER AND SOME OF HIS TEACHINGS

*'That wisdom which hath made our Asia mild.'*

The joy of  
enlighten-  
ment.

THE new discovery he had made certainly filled the Seeker with joy.<sup>1</sup> It is recorded that he broke out into a paean of thanksgiving at the attainment of this new insight, and this has been well translated from the original Pāli by Sir Edwin Arnold :

Many a house of life  
Hath held me—seeking ever him who wrought  
Those prisons of the senses, sorrow-fraught ;  
Sore was my ceaseless strife.  
But now,  
Thou Builder of this tabernacle—Thou !  
I know Thee ! Never shalt thou build again  
These walls of pain,  
Nor raise the roof-tree of deceits ; nor lay  
Fresh rafters on the clay ;  
Broken thy house is, and the ridge-pole split !  
Delusion fashioned it !  
Safe pass I them—deliverance to obtain.

We can sympathize with his joy ; he was as some ship-wrecked sailor clinging to a spar on the stormy waters who comes at last, exhausted but triumphant, to the longed-for shore, his perils all behind him ; or as the merchant who paid his all but became the owner of the pearl of great price.

<sup>1</sup> Joy plays a much greater part in early Buddhism than is generally realized.



Let us seek the hidden meaning of the allegory, that we may the better understand his joy. The Builder of house after house is Tanhā—false clinging to existence, a false egoism ; the Seeker had tried, as he believed, through many existences to find the cause of being, and now in a flash the secret was his. The ‘ridge-pole’ is ignorance, and the ‘rafters’ are evil states of mind.

So then, when wisdom dawns, the ‘ridge-pole’ splits ; and ‘Desire’, the builder, can no more rear these ‘walls of pain’. To escape from the weary round of rebirths were happiness indeed !

But even as the triumph-song died on his lips the Evil His one—who often comes in the form of depression and temptation. despair—drew near and assailed the victor with a sudden and fierce temptation. As the Christ after the great spiritual uplift of His Baptism, so the Buddha after his Enlightenment had to endure fierce assaults of evil ; these are the waves of our emotional life, which is often rhythmic—action and reaction being closely interwoven.

The Buddha was tempted to keep his secret to himself ; for the multitude are slow of understanding and blinded with the ‘dust of desire’, and how shall they be taught ? Let the Enlightened pass into Nirvāna, and let a lost world roll on.

But either his own deep-seated compassion, or a *deus ex machina* in the shape of Brahma, or both in conjunction, rescued him from the wiles of Māra : he put the temptation from him and entered upon the arduous toils of a forty years’ ministry ; this is justly regarded as a greater renunciation than even that of home and family which he had made nine years before.

He would go forth and share the glad tidings ; and he Gautama faced the task resolutely and unflinchingly, for he felt that as preacher. however dull their understanding, and however prejudiced

their hearts, he had a message for all his fellow-countrymen, for chief and peasant, for Brahman and sacrificing-priest, for ascetic and householder.

Something of what he had to say to each will be found at the end of the chapter.

His first thoughts were for the five ascetics who once had been his followers. They were, he heard, at Benares, and to Benares he turned his steps. On the way he met two merchants, who asked him what he did. 'I go', he said, 'to Benares, to set in motion the Wheel of the Law.' They are heart-stirring words.

The 'wheel  
of the law'.

As the Cross is the sign of Christianity, and the Crescent of Islam, so Buddhism has for its blazon the 'spokes and nave of a wheel'. Of this emblem several interpretations are possible. The simplest and most probable is that it stands for a conqueror's chariot that rolls through the world in triumph; another is that it stands for the chariot of the Sun that lightens the universe. In either case the Buddhist Wheel makes an enormous claim.

The first  
Buddhist  
Sermon.

Arrived at Benares, he heard that the five ascetics were in the deer-park known as Isipatana, the Park of the Sages. As they saw him coming they determined to give him no welcome, but to ignore him as an apostate. But something in his look, the personal magnetism which we may well ascribe to him, overcame them in spite of themselves. One offered him a stool; one relieved him of his begging-bowl. He sat down in their midst, and there preached the first Buddhist sermon. This discourse has been preserved and it is of central importance, for in it we see the ideas which have been the 'real lever' of Buddhism. They are two—the two which we saw in the Buddha's own experience. There is Deliverance and there is Assurance of Deliverance. Deliverance and Assurance, surely these are two of the greatest needs of man. And when the Buddha claimed



## INDIAN ASCETICISM

Fakirs seeking by fasting and deep breathing to attain  
a mystic trance

them both, is it strange that men gave him heed? His preaching came from his heart, and into men's hearts it went. He spoke with the authority of the man who has experienced what he tells, and men listened. Two other points may be noted. First, he preached a 'middle path', avoiding asceticism on the one hand, and the worldling's life on the other. Both of these he had fully tested, and he knew that neither of them would lead to the goal desired. Secondly, that goal was open to all. There was no qualification of caste. To the humblest salvation was free. Buddhism, unlike Brahmanism, is in theory at least a democratic creed, and soon kings and paupers, the 'righteous' Brahman and the poor wanton of the city, were numbered amongst his disciples.

The five ascetics were convinced, and once more became his followers. They prayed to be admitted to the 'Path'; and a short ceremony of initiation having been performed, there were now six 'perfect ones', Arahats, on earth. This ceremony, the repetition of the formula 'I take my refuge in the Buddha; I take my refuge in the Law; I take my refuge in the Sangha', is of surpassing interest, for it was the beginning of the Sangha, or community of Buddhist Bhikkhus, that famous order of yellow-robed mendicants which has overspread Asia for more than two thousand years. Many orders have arisen in the West, Templar and Hospitaller, Dominican and Franciscan, but none rivals in extent and continuance the Sangha founded that day in Isipatana; none, perhaps, is so picturesque. Such was the beginning of the Buddha's career as a teacher, a career which carried him, during more than forty years, backwards and forwards over the whole of Northern India.

There is a fascination about the itinerant life which all have at some time felt. We feel it, for instance, in the wonderful pioneer journeys made during last century by

members of the China Inland Mission through the eighteen provinces of China, or in David Livingstone's wanderings through Africa. We feel it as we read John Wesley's journal of his wanderings throughout Great Britain during the century before that. We feel it most in the record of the 'Life of lives', the three full years when Jesus knew no home, because He belonged to all the Holy Land. Such fascination surrounds in marked measure the ministry of the Buddha.

The daily  
round.

What do we know of him, of his daily life, and of the special incidents which filled that forty years? And what at last was the manner of his passing from the world? 'In the days when his reputation stood at its highest point, day by day one might see that man, before whom kings bowed themselves, walking about, alms-bowl in hand, through streets and alleys, from house to house, and, without uttering any request, with downcast look stand silently waiting until a morsel of food was thrown into his bowl. When he had returned from his begging excursion and had eaten his repast there followed, as the Indian climate demanded, a time if not of sleep, at any rate of peaceful retirement. Resting in a quiet chamber, or better still in the cool shade of the dense foliage, he passed the sultry, close hours of the afternoon in solitary contemplation, until the evening came on, and drew him once more from holy silence to the bustling concourse of friend and foe.' To all alike he would give his message of comfort and hope.

It is an idyllic scene, and we shall do well to get a true and sympathetic mental picture of the great teacher; for he was 'one of the most gracious and winsome and kindly of all characters in history, curiously hopeful over hopeless enough people, and wonderfully patient with dull minds'.

There is one well-known story in the Buddhist books which will help us to see how gracious and serene, and withal

how humorous, a teacher he was, and will serve to introduce us to his moral teachings, which are so much more vital than the philosophical concepts he took over from existing systems.

It is related that one day a Brahman farmer was at work, ploughing his wide fields, when the Buddha came with begging-bowl in hand and stood waiting as the farm-hands were being served with their noon-day meal.

The Brahman saw him standing on one side and thus accosted him :

‘I, O recluse, have to plough and sow to earn my food. So shouldst thou first toil and thereafter eat.’

The  
teacher as  
farmer.  
[*Sutta  
Nipāta  
Uravagga.*]

To whom the teacher made answer, ‘I too, O Brahman, plough and sow, and then only do I eat.’

‘Nay but I see no yoke, nor plough, no goad nor oxen belonging to the reverend Gautama.’

Then up spake the Blessed One again, ‘I also, none the less, am a farmer, O Brahman ; I plough and sow and thereafter eat.’

To whom the Brahman made answer in these verses :

‘O Gautama, if farmer thou,  
As thou so brazenly declarest,  
Where are thine oxen and thy plough?  
Come, idle braggart, show us how  
The field for harvest thou preparest!’

To him the Blessed One made answer :

‘A Farmer I, good sir, indeed.  
Right Views my very fruitful seed ;  
The rain that waters it is Discipline ;  
Wisdom herself my yoke and plough.  
(Brahman, dost take my meaning, now?)  
The pole is maiden Modesty,  
And Mindfulness the axle-tree ;  
Alertness is my goad and ploughshare keen !

Guarded in thought and act and speech,  
 With Truthfulness I weed the ground ;  
 In gentle Kindliness is found  
 The way of Salvation I preach.  
 My ox is Endeavour,  
 Which beareth me ever,  
 Where Grief cometh never,  
 To Nirvāna, the Goal I shall reach.

Such, good Brahman, is my farming,  
 And it bears ambrosial crops :  
 Whoso follows out my Teaching  
 Straight for him all Sorrow stops.'

Then the Brahman Kasibhāvadraga poured rice-milk into a golden bowl and offered it to the Blessed One, saying :

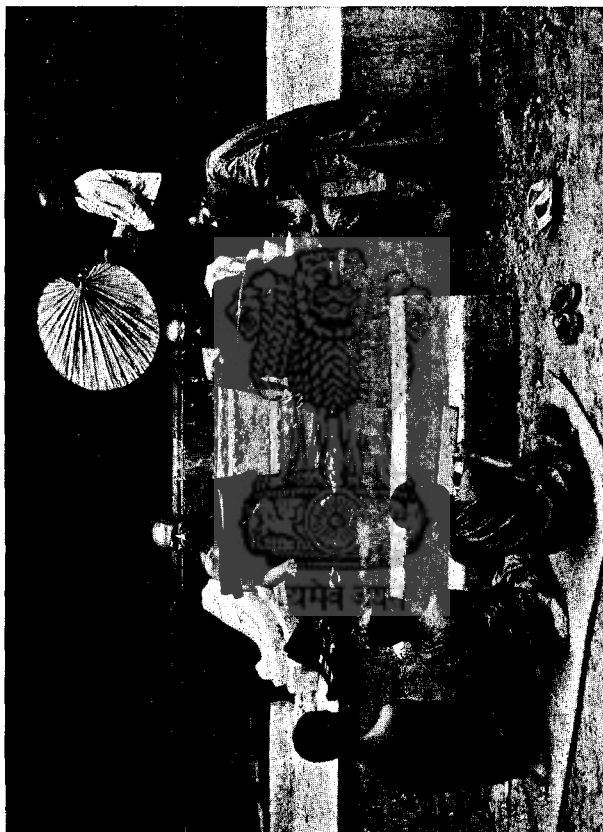
' A Farmer thou in very sooth,  
 Ambrosial is thy crop of Truth !  
 Drink the rice-milk, sir, I pray thee ;  
 Gladly do I now obey thee !'

Some  
 Buddhist  
 virtues.

Here then is a parable setting forth very clearly the chief Buddhist virtues—faith that Gautama's system is true, disciplined obedience, wisdom in choosing the right and rejecting the false, modesty, zeal, self-control, gentleness ; it is a blending of the old Greek and Roman 'cardinal virtues' with the 'graces' of Christianity.

Like Jesus Christ, the Buddha summed up his teaching and his experience in a set of Beatitudes—a description of the happy life which is very popular with Buddhists, and is learnt by every schoolboy in Burma. From this and the parable above the student may learn more of Buddhist ethics than from much discussion of them, and it may prove a useful exercise to compare them with the Beatitudes of Christ, and to make a list of their points of resemblance and of difference.

These Buddhist Beatitudes are said to have been uttered



LEARNING THE BUDDHIST BEATITUDES



at the request of a certain *deva* or god who drew near to the teacher as night fell, and addressed him thus :

The  
Buddhist  
Beatitudes.  
[*Mahā-  
mangala  
Sutta.*]

‘What many men and deities,  
Desiring bliss, have sought to find,  
Come tell me, Master, what it is,  
Which brings most blessing to mankind?’

To whom the sage made answer :

‘To shun the fool, to court the wise,  
This is the highest Paradise :

Pay ye respect where it is due,  
So will true blessing wait on you :

Seek a fit place and there remain,  
Striving self-knowledge to attain :

If in past lives you’ve stored up merit,  
The fruits thereof you’ll now inherit :

Let wisdom, skill, and discipline,  
And gracious kindly words be thine :

Tend parents, cherish wife and child,  
Pursue a blameless life and mild :

Live thou devout, give ample alms,  
Protect thy kin from life’s alarms :

Do good, shun ill, and still beware  
Of the red wine’s insidious snare :

So do thou persevere in good :  
This is the true Beatitude :

Be humble, with thy lot content,  
Grateful and ever reverent :

Study the Law of Righteousness,  
This is the path that leads to Bliss :

Be patient thou, the Saints frequent,  
And ponder still their argument :

The Noble Truths, the life austere  
And chaste that brings Nirvāna here :

The life from eightfold bond secure,  
The life of peace that crowns the pure :

This is the Highest Bliss to find,  
This the chief blessing of mankind.'

High value of Buddhist ethics. Such is the Teacher's summary of how to be happy.

And undoubtedly the man who practised such precepts would be lovable and beloved and therefore happy. To this extent Buddhism is a Gospel.<sup>1</sup> There is no higher moral code save one, and we may surely look upon the Buddha as a prophet who by holding up so lofty an ideal has done much to prepare the way for the Kingdom of God.

Some fatal flaws.

But there are great and even fatal flaws in his system. The poems we have read are summaries of the ideal for the lay-adherent of the religion, and Nirvāna is promised to him as well as to the monk. But in practice the monk, who is a celibate and must beg his food, is on a far higher plane than the laity, who are not expected to reach Nirvāna ; married life is regarded as sensuality, and all forms of attachment are wrong. The highest merit a layman can attain is by giving gifts to the Sangha, and the lofty system of Gautama's Ethics degenerates in most cases to a petty system of book-keeping. Merit has, in fact, become an obsession in Buddhist lands, and is killing out the more spiritual conceptions.

Thus the motive to good actions is made to consist in the merit acquired, and more merit results from gifts to the Sangha than from any act of benevolence to a suffering layman. Thus 'giving' is made of much more importance than social service : 'charity' takes the place of 'love'.

<sup>1</sup> In *Buddhist Ideals* I have attempted a comparison of Buddhist and Christian ethics.

Again, this emphasis on the unmarried state is unhealthy and cannot make for the uplift of nations. It has had 2200 years of trial under ideal conditions in Ceylon and at least 1500 years in Burma, and cannot be said to have stood the test satisfactorily.<sup>1</sup> For Buddhism is not a gospel for society ; it has little nation-building power. Buddhists do not co-operate in national causes, though there is much individual philanthropy. The Buddhist in fact conceives this world as evil ; the sooner it ends the better ; why patch it up ?

Thus there is no great constraining motive 'for my sake and the Gospel's', and no great enthusiasm for a Kingdom of God to be set up upon earth.

The best test of a religion is 'Does it work?' Buddhism does not successfully meet this test when judged by the life of its laymen, though there is much kindness and a certain stoical self-control which are admirable qualities.

Another good test is 'What is the *summum bonum*, the ideal to be aimed at? Is it a worthy ideal of happiness? Is it attainable?' The goal  
Nirvāna.

From the above two poems the goal is seen to be 'Nirvāna', a word familiar enough in the West,—yet too often misunderstood.

For the Hindu of Gautama's day it meant escape from the weary round of re-birth by absorption into the being of Brahma ; the drop merging itself at last in the ocean from which it came. So was the soul at last set free from its long travail.

Nirvāna means by derivation 'extinction', and has been variously interpreted as 'extinction of the illusion of separate being', as 'extinction of false desire' and as 'extinction of consciousness'.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapters V and VI.

When Gautama Buddha adopted it he also adapted it to suit his system.

He taught that there is no soul passing, as the Brahmans held, 'like a caterpillar from leaf to leaf,' but only an energy, which, when the corporeal constituents fall apart, is set free to start a new life. This is called 'Karma', or action—the summed-up energies of men's character, the resultant force of what they have done and what they are. This 'Karma' vitalizes the ovum and the seed as they come together, and starts a new individual on his career; yet the new individual is really the expression of the old energies. Thus there is no *Transmigration* in the Hindu sense, but rather *Reindividualization*.

Now Nirvāna is freedom from this process; and this involves:

- (1) Freedom from the body;
- (2) Freedom from desire;
- (3) Freedom from the other conditions that we know here.

The Buddhist books describe Nirvāna chiefly in negatives. Yet it is not extinction, 'for the Ego', says Gautama, 'never existed': there never was a soul but only a bundle of sensations and faculties; and what never existed cannot be extinguished.

This is difficult teaching, and for the modern Buddhist Nirvāna comes as a rule to mean one of three things, or a blending of two of them:

- (1) Total extinction;
- (2) Extinction of evil;
- (3) A Paradise of bliss.

All these aspects can be found in the descriptions given in the sacred books, and the Buddhist teachers themselves are divided as to the true meaning of the Goal.

But whatever it be it will mean rest and peace and freedom,

and it undoubtedly attracts the Buddhist very powerfully, though he has given up all effort to attain it in any but a very remote rebirth.

What then did Gautama really mean by it? He seems to have meant primarily an ethical experience—that deep calm, ‘cool’ happiness which comes from righteous living, coupled with a more mystical experience of a trance-like nature which is possible to certain exceptionally endowed minds.

Therefore he laid great stress upon Meditation, and the Buddhist books contain elaborate directions and exercises in this most difficult art, which is now very little practised in Ceylon or Burma, but seems to be kept alive by one of the Buddhist sects in Japan. By such deep abstraction the mind is rapt from the things of sense and a great quiet is attained, which is so unlike other experience that it cannot be described, and so delightful that men have striven and agonized in thousands to experience it. Readers of *Hypatia* will find good descriptions of similar practices in the Early Christian Church, and it is open to question whether in its extreme stages men have not ‘produced a great desolation and called it peace’. The happiness of a good conscience is one thing, and that of a semi-swoon is another.

Yet the emphasis laid upon the contemplative life is most valuable, and we all need to practise that absorption and that fixity of attention to the things which are unseen and eternal. It is man’s hardest and most fruitful exercise; and we of the modern world know far too little of the secret of escaping into the kingdom of the mind, or of applying ourselves to ‘waiting upon God’, which is the Christian analogue of Buddhist meditation.

Can we learn any other lessons at the feet of this great Teacher? We shall do well if we can catch something of his fine courtesy, of his broad-minded toleration, of his

Some  
valuable  
lessons.

wonderful compassion, and of his democratic spirit. For he treated all men as brothers, and did more than any other Indian to break down the tyranny of caste, though it had not in his day done its worst.

We may learn to conquer our innate curse of race-prejudice, which does more than anything else to keep us from being true gentlemen, and which is the greatest stumbling-block of all in the way of the Kingdom of God in India and the East. Yet we shall need a higher and more constraining motive. Buddhism—the imitation of Buddha—is too cold and reasonable: it is only as we learn to see other men as ‘brothers for whom Christ died’ that we really learn to love those whose ways and colour are different from our own. But it is no small help to remember that the two grandest figures in history were both ‘brown men’, and that one belonged to the working-classes!

Gautama's  
humility.

The life of Gautama was long and eventful; yet so much is legend, and the order of events is so uncertain, that no consecutive account of his life is really possible.

Forty-five years he had toiled to give men new aspirations and new courage, walking sometimes great distances in the blazing sun, sleeping often with no cover but his yellow robe, and no bed but the bare frozen ground of these Northern hills—a serene, majestic and gracious figure, so winsome that he often won men by a simple parable or a childish analogy, so sure of himself that he never faltered or turned back. And how humble he was! In spite of the amazing claims attributed to him, yet humility is stamped upon his life.

He returned, we read, to his father's house, a mendicant carrying a begging bowl, for which kings should one day strive. ‘You disgrace our royal line by begging,’ said the old king: ‘It is the custom of that nobler line, the line of the Buddhas,’ was the calm and meek reply.

His wife, the lady Yasodharā, came to meet him, and demanded passionately the inheritance due to Rāhula her son, and the boy followed him from street to street.

Two  
Scenes :  
the visit to  
his home.

Very meekly he offered them 'the best gift'—preaching the Law, for 'no inheritance is greater than the Truth'. Whereupon the old chief, the young wife, and the boy Rāhula, all entered the Path, and there was a joyous family reunion.

Very happy too was his passing away—his entrance, as he believed, into full and perfect Nirvāna. He had done his work and he was free to depart.

His  
passing,  
480 B. C.

At the age of eighty he was still preaching, and his work took him to Pava, where he made a halt in a mango-grove belonging to Kunda, the smith.

With his usual courtesy and simplicity he allowed this low-caste man to prepare him a meal, and with his followers ate it in all good faith. But it brought on a violent dysentery, and he set out, shattered and feeble, for Kusinārā.

His strength failing, he lay down. His disciples were furious with Kunda, the smith, but he would allow no word of reproach to reach the poor man.

They pushed on and came to the banks of the river Hiranyavatī, and there the venerable Teacher lay down to die. On a flat slab of rock they placed him, beneath two sandal-wood trees, and the faithful Ānanda, his personal attendant, stood weeping at his head.

The Master thanked him for all his kindness and courtesy and comforted him with these words :

'Peace, Ānanda ! Weep not. Have I not told thee that it is in the nature of things that we must be separated from all that is dearest and nearest to us ? Must not that which is made up of component parts dissolve and pass away ?

'For long years, O Ānanda, thou hast been very near me, and hast tended me with acts and words and thoughts of kindness and goodwill. Well hast thou performed thine

office. Persevere, be vigilant, and soon thou too shalt be free from the great evils of sensual desire, of individual existence, of illusion and ignorance.'

Then, lying majestic and calm 'in the lion-attitude', upon his right side, his head resting on one arm, he spoke his last words, an epitome of all his teachings :

'It may be, O Ānanda, that when I am gone this thought will arise in your minds : "The word of the Master is no more. We have now a Master no more." Think not thus. The truth, the law which I have taught you, that shall be your Master when I am gone.

'Listen now, Brethren, and farewell. Everything is perishing and prone to dissolution ; it is the nature of things. Work without ceasing to attain release.' So he passed into the great Silence, into that state which alone, he believed, is changeless amidst the flux of things.

In the jungle at Polannaruwa, in Ceylon, is a vast rock-hewn image of this master of men, and his disciple Ānanda stands weeping at his head. But the attitude and the expression of the dying man are calm and serene, and express very powerfully the stoical strength of the words :

I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul.

Such is his message to the world : 'Each man is his own helper : there is none other to help him.'

For he came at a time when men were forming false conceptions of God, when they were 'religious' without being moral. And Buddhism is a mighty rebellion, not against religion, but against a false religiosity which says that salvation may be bought by offerings to the gods. Such a view makes the god more immoral than his worshipper, and the Buddha bent all his powers of brain and heart to insist that 'Salvation is character'.



We who have known the Friendship of God in Christ realize that this is a splendid half-truth, and we should say rather that Salvation is the friendship of God ; and that no man is really captain of his soul until he has surrendered it to Christ. Buddhism, in a word, teaches a rigorous and stoical self-mastery ; Christianity demands a passionate self-surrender. And the freedom which Gautama sought may be more easily found in the service of God !

## EARLY BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

### Points of Similarity.

1. Both claim to be universal and democratic religions, open to all.
2. Both claim to give men salvation, and to make them happy.
3. Both connect this salvation very intimately with righteous character.
4. The two ethical systems have much in common, e. g. :  
 The emphasis laid upon salvation ;  
 The transiency of things ;  
 The need of renunciation and self-sacrifice ;  
 The responsibility of life ;  
 The beauty of holiness and the power of goodwill.

### Points of Difference.

#### *Buddhism :*

1. Is agnostic : it says that God has nothing to do with us, nor we with Him.
2. Does not involve any personal relationship to Gautama Buddha : Buddhism is the *imitation* of Buddha.

#### *Christianity :*

1. Is theistic : it says that God and men have everything to do with one another.
2. Involves the closest possible relationship with Christ : Christianity is the *Friendship* of Christ.

3. Salvation is for all who are wise enough to keep the Law ; it can be *earned*.

4. Existence itself is evil. Man must seek to escape existence as we know it here.

5. The world is without purpose other than that of expiation.

6. Nirvāna is (a) quiescence ; (b) solitude.

7. Man's success depends only upon his own effort.

8. Desire must be crushed.

3. Salvation is for all who are loyal to the Law-giver ; it is the *gift* of God.

4. There is nothing evil but an evil will. Man must seek not less life but a more consecrated existence.

5. The world is full of purpose—the gathering of a redeemed Family about their Father and King.

6. Heaven is (a) holy activity and the unveiled Presence of God ; (b) a social life, a citizenship of the Divine Kingdom.

7. Man's success depends upon co-operation with God.

8. Desire must be consecrated.

## ILLUSTRATIVE READINGS

### Examples of Gautama Buddha's Ethical Teaching.

(From 'The Buddha's Way of Virtue.'—*The Dhammapada*.)

*To the Worldling*: 'One is the road leading to riches, another is that leading to Nirvāna.'

'His is the true wealth and fame who is upright and faithful to the Teaching.'

*the Soldier*: 'A man is no warrior who worries living things : by abstaining from hurtful conduct is a man a true warrior.'

‘Greater is he who conquers self than he who conquers a thousand thousand in battle.’

*To the Family-man* : ‘Hard it is to leave home for the holy life ; hard also is life in the bosom of the family !’

‘Having tasted the joy of solitude and serenity a man is free from sorrow and from sin, and tastes the nectar of piety.’

*To the Philosopher* : ‘Better than a thousand empty words is one pregnant word which brings the hearer peace.’

*To the Devotee* : ‘If one man for a hundred years tends the sacred fire in the glade, and another for a moment pays reverence to the pure, his is the better worship.’

### On Getting Angry.

(From the *Visuddhi Magga*, ix.)

‘My friend, thou who hast retired from the world and art angry with this man, tell me what it is thou art angry with ? Art thou angry with the hairs of his head, or with the hairs of his body, or with his nails ? Or art thou angry with the earthy element in the hair of his head and of his body ? Or art thou angry with the watery element, or with the fiery element, or with the windy element in them ? What is meant by the venerable So-and-so is only the five groups, the six organs of sense, the six objects of sense, the six sense-consciousnesses. With which of these art thou angry ? Is it with the form-group ? Or is it with the sensation-group, perception-group, predisposition-group, or consciousness-group ? Or art thou angry with an organ of sense, or an object of sense, or a sense-consciousness ?’

For a person who has made the above analysis, there is no room for anger, any more than there is for a grain of mustard-seed on the point of a needle, or for painting upon the air.

**Nirvāna.**(From the *Milinda Pañha*.)

As if a man should fall into a burning fiery furnace and, finding no way of escape, should grow weary of the pain and abandon hope. Even so, O King, discontent arises in men's hearts as they find no refuge and no sure satisfaction in life, and fever racks their limbs ; still hopeless and weary of rebirth they find no way of escape.

Then in the mind of him who realizes the insecurity of this transient life arises the thought : ' All on fire is this ceaseless flux, a blazing flame ! Full of despair is it and very fearful ! Oh, that I might reach a state where becoming is at an end ! How calm, how sweet would be that end of all defects, of all craving and passion—that great Peace—Nirvāna ! '

So does his mind leap forward into that state where the flux has ceased, where peace is found. Then does he exult and rejoice : ' At last, at long last have I won a refuge and a rest.' . . .

' Is there any place where a man may stand, and ordering his life aright realize Nirvāna ? ' ' Yes, O King . . . Virtue is that place.'

**Some Significant Dates of this Period.**

660-580 B. C.	Zoroaster, founder of the Parsi religion.
627-580 B. C.	Jeremiah the Prophet.
c. 560 B. C.	<i>Birth of Gautama, the Buddha.</i>
c. 525 B. C.	His enlightenment. Aeschylus born.
510 B. C.	Pythagoras in Greece.
	Athens a Republic.
	Rome a Republic.
c. 551-479 B. C.	Confucius in China.
c. 480 B. C.	<i>Death of Gautama.</i>
c. 440 B. C.	Euripides in Greece.
400 B. C.	Socrates drinks the hemlock.
c. 400-350 B. C.	Plato and Aristotle.

## CHAPTER III

### THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHISM (480-250 B.C.) AND ITS GOLDEN AGE (250-100 B.C.)

*'Proud emperors carved his sweet words upon the rocks and caves.'*

THE Buddha, like the Christ, left no written record of his teachings : unlike Him, he had no intention of founding a new religion.

Both of these great Teachers found religion a matter of rites and ceremonies by which moral standards were being perverted: the one left it a holy passion for Himself; the other strove to leave it a lofty system of morality. Both entrusted the truth they had found to a body of earnest disciples, a brotherhood, in which for the present no man was either first or last. Neither established a hierarchy, and there was nothing in the way of organization. Yet in both cases there was a mighty enthusiasm which, as it grew and spread, began to organize its forces and to overthrow the existing religions.

For if Brotherhood were to be the new order of things, Brahman and Pharisee must either be converted or be overthrown : the axe was laid to the root of the tree : the new wine could not be contained in the old bottles.

During the lifetime of Gautama his teaching had not spread much beyond the kingdoms of Magadha and Kosala.<sup>1</sup> now as fresh adherents grouped themselves under the leaf

<sup>1</sup> Roughly Behar and Oudh.

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disciples—Kāsyapa, Ānanda, Moggallāna, and Sāriputta—its influence slowly widened, and men began to complain that the whole country was turning celibate and donning the yellow robe. Even during the lifetime of the Buddha it had been said: 'The recluse Gautama causes fathers to beget no children; he causes wives to become widows; he causes families to become extinct.' Yet, widespread as it was, the new religion still remained a sect of Brahmanism and was in some danger of being reabsorbed by this amazing creed, with its extraordinary powers of assimilation. Moreover Jainism, another rival of growing power which had much in common with Buddhism, was also in the field. Accordingly it very soon became necessary for the Buddhists to decide exactly in what the teachings of the Buddha consisted; and as all the tradition was oral it was in special danger of being perverted.

First  
Buddhist  
council.

So, according to the Buddhist chronicles, a great council met soon after Gautama's death in the neighbourhood of Rajagriha, the capital of Magadha, or South Behar; it was presided over by Kāsyapa, and 500 Bhikkhus took part in it, reciting the sayings of the teacher for a period of seven months.

Many scholars question the truth of this story, but it is certain that in very early days divisions occurred in the Sangha with regard to matters both of discipline and of doctrine.

A party arose, for instance, demanding a softening down of the rather austere discipline enjoined by the Buddha: they urged that eating after midday, and the use of comfortable beds and unguents, and the possession of money harmless indulgences.

The second  
council.

The austere party objected, maintaining that the Teacher when he laid down these regulations knew the weakness of the flesh, and another council met about 380 B.C. at

Vaisālī, north of Patna, which passed stern decrees rejecting all such relaxations of the primitive discipline.

As to points of doctrine, it is said that by the second century of its existence Buddhism had already split into eighteen sects ; but their differences were not essential.

It is claimed by the Buddhists that these councils also definitely settled the Buddhist canon ; but it seems probable that this was not done till the reign of King Asoka, about 250 B.C.

How did the Bhikkhus pass their time? Undoubtedly <sup>The life of the Sangha.</sup> a great deal of it was given to learning the teachings by heart, as is done to this day. For the six rainy months of the year they retired for this purpose and for meditation into rock-hewn caves and dwellings built for them by the faithful. Sometimes they dwelt in companies and sometimes in twos or threes ; stronger and more heroic spirits even went out alone to seek salvation.

Very winsome is the spirit of some of their ejaculations and songs. There is one which describes the spirit of such communal life, its great joy and peace :

‘O joy ; we live in bliss ; amongst men of hatred hating none. Let us dwell amongst them indeed without hate.

‘O joy ; in bliss we dwell ; healthy amidst the ailing. Let us indeed dwell amongst them in perfect health. Yea, in very bliss we dwell, free from care amidst the careworn. Let us dwell amidst them indeed without care. In bliss we dwell, possessing nothing ; let us dwell feeding upon joy as the shining ones (gods) in their splendour.’

Yet the Buddha taught that it was better to dwell alone : ‘Alone man is as Brahma ; in twos men dwell as the lesser gods ; in threes they are as a village. More than this is a mob.’

So some there were, ‘heroes of the solitary way’, who lived quite alone. One such hermit in Burma has lately



THE YELLOW-ROBED MENDICANTS



## 48 EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHISM

been converted, and has great power in attracting his countrymen to Christ; for even the Buddhist East pays enormous respect to asceticism.

Here is the song of one such stoic of early Buddhism :

Blind and alone my way I wend,  
The desert-sands before, behind;  
Far from the haunts of sinful men  
Here let me die, alone and blind.

Undoubtedly the religion which could call out such devotion was not lacking in power; and much of this power we may attribute to the memory of that wonderful personality who had called it into being.

Another contemporary poem gives us an attractive picture of the yellow-robed mendicants upon their begging-round :

Versed in the Righteous Law they are, and skilful :  
Aye, and they practise too the law they preach ;  
Learnèd and self-possessed and ever watchful,  
Living in all things as the Sages teach.

Must I not love them? Far afield they wander,  
Wise and so lowly-minded and discreet ;  
Knowing the end of every ill and sorrow—  
See, Father, how they pace the village street !

Downcast their eyes ; their paces measured, sober,  
They meditate, nor look to left or right :  
They lay not up on earth the fleeting treasure ;  
Finished their quest, their lofty goal in sight !

Poor are they too, yet touch not gold or silver ;  
Each day supplies for them their simple needs ;  
From many lands and towns they join the Order,  
Bound in the sacred tie of loving deeds.<sup>1</sup>

But 'bachelors in barracks are seldom plaster saints', and, as a later book confesses, men joined the Order with mixed motives, some 'merely to evade their debts'; so grave

<sup>1</sup> *Therīgāthā*, 271-90.

abuses crept into the Sangha,<sup>1</sup> and the celibate life took a terrible toll. Sloth and *ennui* also played havoc, and many a monk must have rejoiced when the enforced seclusion of the rainy season ended, and he was free to go out and preach and mingle once more with the vulgar herd!

They were not unresponsive to the efforts of the Sangha. A 'holy man' in India never starves; there are over 1,000,000 ascetics to this day living on the alms of the faithful. And Buddhism insists that the best act a man can do is to give gifts to the Sangha: 'it is the harvest field of Merit.'

Some, no doubt, amongst the householders would give them the cold shoulder and bid them work for their living; but India is a land of idealism, and to most it would seem a perfectly reasonable division of labour—the celibate to work with his mind, the householder with his hands. For the recluse stores up merit which helps the layman in the next life; and should the layman not help him in this? A division of labour.

At this time much 'merit' was earned by the building of Sacred buildings. *dāgobas*. These were at first mere mounds covering some relic of the Buddha, such as an eyelash, a collar-bone, or a tooth; but they came to be built also to mark certain sacred spots, and gradually they became elaborated into the beautiful conical buildings now found all over Ceylon and Burma.

No images of Gautama were at this time set up, but symbols—the wheel, the footprint, the lotus, and the elephant—began to appear, and by 200–150 B.C. were very common, while the sacred Bo-tree was already venerated. In one of the Barhut sculptures the parricide King Ajātasatru is seen prostrating himself before a footprint of the Buddha, and in others elephants are worshipping the Bo-tree. These are the beginnings of worship—which is essentially foreign to Buddhism, but natural to the heart of man

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Illustrative Reading, No. II, Chapter V.

## 50 EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHISM

—beginnings which ended in disastrous ways, as we shall see in a later chapter; for man must worship something, and if the high be denied him he tends to seek the low and worship that.

The Greek  
invasions.

Meanwhile, in the great world outside these quiet haunts of the Sangha events were taking place which are of profound importance and interest, both because of their influence upon the history of Buddhism and because of the communications they established between East and West.

‘As every schoolboy knows’, Alexander the Great, in his search for new worlds to conquer, penetrated into India. The petty kingdoms of the north and north-west made common cause against the Western invader, and India became for the first time a united empire.

The  
Maurya  
Dynasty :  
Chandra-  
gupta I,  
321-297  
B. C.

The founder of it was Chandragupta I, first of the Maurya kings, a low-caste adventurer<sup>1</sup> whose prowess and daring were celebrated in many a stirring ballad for centuries and are still known in India. One such story tells of how he fell into the hands of Alexander himself and of how the great conqueror spared his life.

However this may be, Alexander died before Chandragupta had really come into his kingdom, and it was the troubles which followed his death that gave the Indian general his chance.

Uniting the eastern kingdoms of Kosala and Magadha with those in the north-west, he established an empire stretching from Afghanistan to Bengal and from the Himālayas to the Central Provinces, and the conquering Greeks found this solid barrier in the way of their encroachments from the north-west.

Nor was Chandragupta content with a defensive policy. Pushing into Greek territory, he forced Seleukos to cede the

<sup>1</sup> Low-caste on his mother's side, Chandragupta was regarded in India as an upstart; though his father was of the ruling house of Magadha,



## SUMANGALA

### A MODERN LEADER OF THE SANGHA

The Ven. Sri Sumangala, High Priest of the Adam's Peak Monastery, a good and very learned Bhikkhu who died lately

Indian province that the Greeks had occupied. A treaty was finally made, and Seleukos gave one of his daughters in marriage to the victor, receiving in return a rich gift of many elephants.

The Greek Megasthenes was sent to the court of Chandragupta at Pātaliputra, and from the fragments of his journal, the *Indika*, which have survived, we learn much that is of interest. The Greek wondered, for instance, to find that slavery was unknown in India, whereas it was the very basis of Greek civilization.

Of Bimbisāra, the son of Chandragupta, we know little, Bimbisāra,  
297-273  
B. C. except that he reigned from 297 to 273 B. C., and that, like his father, he was a successful king but no friend to Buddhism. It was he who tried to purchase a Greek philosopher from the Greeks, only to be told that in this respect at any rate Greece was in advance of India—she did not sell her wise men!

There is little doubt, too, that Greece taught India many important lessons during this period—among others the art of building in stone, an art in which India rapidly became highly proficient. And there was giving as well as taking. A later Buddhist book contains a fascinating account of imaginary philosophical discussions between the Greek king Menander and the Buddhist sage Nāgasena.<sup>1</sup>

But Bimbisāra is chiefly famous as the father of Asoka, Asoka the  
Great, 273-  
232 B. C. the great Buddhist emperor who came to the throne in 273 B. C.

This great ruler, who has been called ‘an Alexander with Buddhism for his Hellas’, ‘an unselfish Napoleon with *mettam* (benevolence) in the place of *la gloire*’, and ‘the Constantine of Buddhism’, who has been compared to Charlemagne, and Cromwell, and M. Aurelius, marks a

<sup>1</sup> The *Milinda Pañha*. See Illustrative Reading, No. IX, at the end of this chapter.

great epoch in the history of Buddhism. He is justly honoured for his devotion to a great cause. 'If a man's fame', says the German scholar Köppen, 'can be measured by the number of hearts who revere his memory . . . then Asoka is more famous than Caesar or Charlemagne.'

It is a large claim ; yet it is undoubtedly just, for every Buddhist of any culture knows the story of Asoka and loves his memory. What St. Paul did for Christianity Asoka did for Buddhism, taking it out from the provinces and making it an imperial religion.

This seems a truer view than that which holds that Asoka found Buddhism so powerful that as a matter of policy he adopted it : for had it reached such a point the unscrupulous Chandragupta would have seized this opportunity of welding his empire together, and Asoka still speaks in rock-hewn edicts for himself and for his deep love and fostering care of the Dhamma.

Scattered very widely over India, his inscriptions have lately been deciphered, and they tell us much of the man and something of the religion he adopted.

He began his rule as other kings have done, a man of war who, as tradition says,<sup>1</sup> waded to the throne through the blood of his ninety-nine brothers, and sought, as one of his edicts tells us, to add the neighbouring kingdom of Kalinga to his empire. This war of aggression marks a turning-point in his history. As the stricken deer had awakened compassion in the heart of Gautama, so the sufferings of these conquered fellow men seem to have stabbed the spirit of Asoka awake.

One of his edicts confesses that the victory which was his

<sup>1</sup> This tradition is almost certainly untrue ; it probably sprang from the desire of Buddhists to vindicate the power of their Law, by placing 'a dark background of early wickedness behind the bright picture of his mature piety'. (Vincent Smith.)

pride and joy became his grief and shame, and he became an ardent Brddhist, assuming in later years the yellow robe.

This conversion of King Asoka, about the year 259 B.C., begins the Golden Age of Buddhism, during which it completely triumphed for a time over Brahmanism.

Asoka tells us of his joy that 'the gods have been proved to be untrue', and the *Mahāvamsa*, the great Buddhist chronicle, records the expulsion of 60,000 Brahmans from the royal presence and the admission of an equal number of the yellow-robed followers of the Buddha!

Asoka's reforms began in his own palace. To the chagrin of his court no doubt, the royal hunt was given up and meat eaten very sparingly, whilst pilgrimages and sermons took the place of former junketings. Since his days the Buddhist has learnt to combine these in an admirable blend of solemnity and merrymaking.

Asoka used the splendid organization his grandfather had set up as a means of spreading the religion: he was himself a fatherly autocrat who gave his people much in the way of exhortation, and he urged the subordinate officials of his empire to follow his example. Much of his teaching is obvious and his tone is a little pompous, yet undoubtedly the edicts (selections from which are printed at the end of the chapter) contain a code of morality, which, if it were observed, would exalt any nation.

But the good king was not content with merely exhorting his own subjects 'to follow the Good Law': he made Buddhism also a great missionary religion. Entering into political relations with Antiochus II of Syria, with Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt, and with Antigonus of Macedonia (all of whom the edicts mention by name), Asoka took the opportunity of trying to introduce his religion into their lands. Moreover, in the year 252 B.C., he summoned a Buddhist council to meet at Pātaliputra (the modern Asoka's  
embassies  
and mis-  
sions.

Patna), which not only took steps to safeguard discipline and doctrine and to form the Buddhist canon, but also planned religious missions to Ceylon in the south, to Kashmir in the north, and to what is now Mysore in the west. These missions were unsuccessful in Africa, Europe, and Asia Minor, but met with good results in India and Ceylon. In fact the history of Ceylon may almost be said to begin with the mission of the saintly Mahinda, Asoka's own son, who, with his sister Sanghamitta, planted a twig of the famous Bo-tree, and with it made Buddhism indigenous in the beautiful island of Lanka.

The Bud-  
dhism of  
Asoka.

What was the religion which so inspired Asoka? It is clear that it was Buddhism, but Buddhism stripped of almost all its philosophy—Buddhism treated as a code of morality for men living in the world, not as a Gospel of salvation for men who desire to quit it.

From this lay-Buddhism he drew real inspiration, high devotion to duty, a deep sense of responsibility for his subjects, an enthusiasm for all 'that is lovely and of good report', above all a very sane and practical compassion. Thus he cared in every way he could for the physical as well as the moral good of his people. In the making of roads and wells, in irrigation and forestry, he anticipated the best modern governments; in organizing charity and in founding hospitals for man and beast he anticipated the efforts of modern philanthropy; and in combining with an intense zeal for his own religion a broad toleration for that of other men he set an example which is very attractive.

Asoka an  
anomaly.

Buddhists point to the reign of King Asoka as evidence of what Buddhism can do as a nation-building power; and all students of history will acknowledge that it did much.

Yet Asoka is in a sense an anomaly; for the truly Buddhistic thing for him to have done was to put his teaching into practice, and 'for the sake of the hereafter'



to have quitted wives and palaces, leaving the worldling and householder to go their way. He was inconsistent with a certain splendid inconsistency which is only possible to kings; and in his reverence for the Sangha and his liberal gifts to them, we can see that he accepted the Buddhist belief that the celibate is on a higher plane, whilst he himself, though the father of the religion, was content to remain on a lower one.

All his efforts, again, to make the world a better place are in a sense un-Buddhistic; for Buddhism teaches that the world is so hopelessly out of gear that the best thing that a man can do is to leave it. It is past patching up!

Again, the morality he inculcates is not essentially Buddhistic, but rather a universal common-sense morality—dutifulness to parents, kindness, temperance, justice, truthfulness; and Buddhism is hardly mentioned, explicitly at least, in his edicts.

Yet though he belonged only in name to the Sangha, he did much for its welfare; indeed, from the speedy break-up of his empire after his death it seems as if he must have, to some extent, neglected the affairs of state in his enthusiasm for a higher cause.

What can we learn from his edicts and other monuments of the condition of Buddhism in his day?

The  
Buddhism  
of his day.

(a) In the first place we find that the erection of stūpas or dāgobas had gone on apace. Certain sacred spots were now marked in this way; e. g. the Lumbini Grove in Nepal where Gautama was born, Budh-Gaya where he attained enlightenment, Benares where he began his preaching, and Kusināgara where he passed away. Other shrines too had become centres of worship, and his edicts seek to check this tendency to worship; yet the king's own zeal for building did much to foster it.

(b) But no image of the Buddha was yet set up; even

the later buildings—splendid gateways and rails of stone belonging to the second century B. C.—contain only symbols, and it is not till about 100 A. D. that figures of the Buddha begin to appear.

(c) A stūpa erected in honour of Kanakamuni (Kongamana) was twice enlarged by Asoka, and this Kanakamuni was one of the mythical former Buddhas who are now believed in throughout the Buddhist world. At first they were three, then six, then they grew to be twenty-six in the imagination of their followers. Here is another tendency springing up in Buddhism which is contrary to the spirit of its founder. 'Gautama had consciously and resolutely turned away from speculative thought, except such as was inseparably connected with the question of salvation; but in the intellectual atmosphere of India vague phantasies unconsciously sprang up, which developed into universal history in the grand style. They played with measureless expanses of space and time; they created limitless worlds, to each of which they assigned their tale of fictitious Buddhas. The historical Gautama, Siddhōdana's son, is foreshadowed by them in the whole limitless past. This sort of idea was already prevalent in Asoka's day.'

Such were the tendencies of the new teaching, now promoted to be the state religion, and doing much to make the nation great. Amongst its most useful institutions is the fortnightly holiday; a day for preaching and religious observances, when even the layman should keep the eight precepts.

Asoka's  
council,  
240 or 239  
B.C.

But perhaps the most far-reaching of the acts of Asoka was the beginning of the formation of the canon of Buddhist Scriptures. The earlier councils may have done something in this direction, but to Asoka belongs the credit of the first serious attempt to enumerate the sacred books and

to preserve the canon. The list published on one of his pillars seems to be the nucleus of what was afterwards known as the *Tripitaka*, or Three Baskets, which contain :

1. Dialogues and narratives of the Buddha : *Suttas*.
2. Discipline for the Bhikkhus : *Vinaya*.
3. Philosophy and Psychology : *Abhidhamma*.

The value of such a preservation of the original tenets is obvious ; and the cause of their formulation was similar to that which led to the writing of the Gospels : false teaching was springing up and false developments of primitive doctrine were taking place.

To such developments we have now to turn our thoughts ; but first let us attempt an appreciation of the great Buddhist emperor.

He died in 232 B. C., and almost at once his vast empire began to relapse into the old confusion of petty states. Judged, therefore, from the standpoint of statecraft, he was not wholly successful ; for a man's work is best judged by its permanent results.

But as a religious leader Asoka stands out supreme among kings : a man of wide vision and patient execution ; of boundless energy and optimism ; of wise foresight and of liberal respect for goodness in any form ; of deep compassion, and of that 'enthusiasm of humanity' which makes his rule a kind of 'theocracy without a God'.

From him, too, we may learn much that is of permanent value ; for he combined the geniality and the passion for peace which made King Edward VII so great with the fatherly interest in all departments of his kingdom and the passion for righteousness which were the high qualities of Queen Victoria. And in sending out his missionaries into Eastern lands he has proved a mighty force in bringing light and law into lands where the darkness and confusion of false animistic beliefs had hitherto reigned supreme.

May we not find in this also an inspiration and a call to the noblest of all callings? The missionary to Buddhist lands is, in a true and noble sense, carrying on to its fulfilment the work of Gautama and Asoka; seeking to guide their followers to One who will enable them to keep the Good Law, and who alone can give them that Peace which they have sought so earnestly. In Him are blended the Righteousness of the Law with the mystic passion for God which, apart from Him, India has never succeeded in uniting.



## ILLUSTRATIVE READINGS

SOME EXTRACTS FROM THE EDICTS OF KING ASOKA.

(From Mr. Vincent Smith's Translation.)

### I. The Fruit of Exertion.

Thus saith His Sacred Majesty :

For more than two and a half years I was a lay disciple, without, however, exerting myself strenuously. But it is more than a year since I joined the Order, and have exerted myself strenuously.

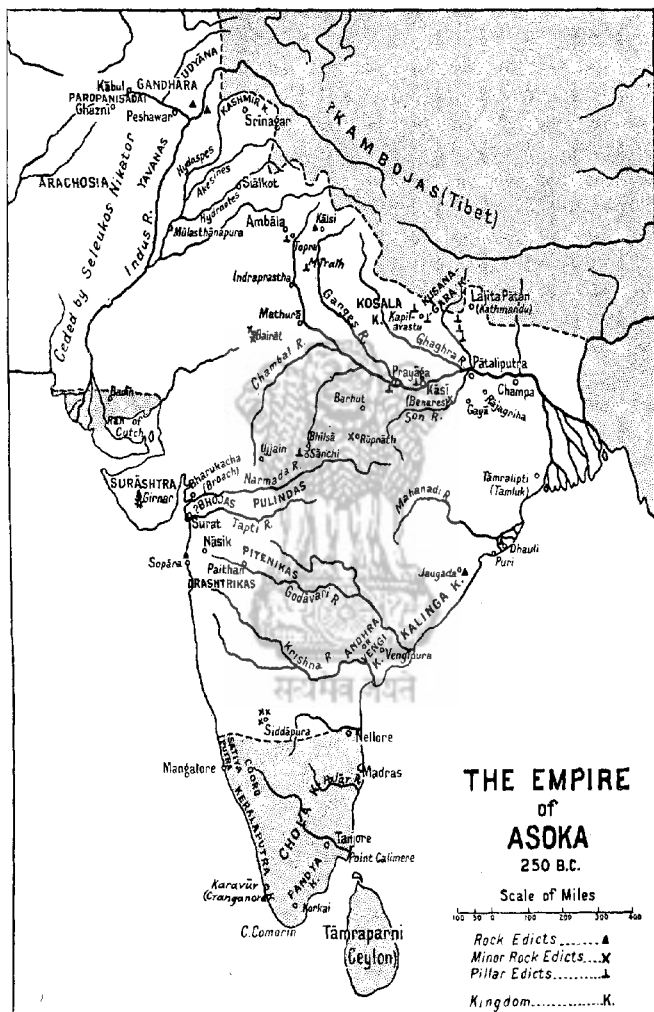
During that time the gods who were regarded as true all over India have been shown to be untrue.

For this is the fruit of exertion. Nor is this to be attained by a great man only, because even by the small man who chooses to exert himself immense heavenly bliss may be won.

### II. Summary of the Law of Piety.

Thus saith His Sacred Majesty :

Father and mother must be hearkened to; similarly,



respect for living creatures must be firmly established ; truth must be spoken. These are the virtues of the Law of Piety which must be practised. Similarly, the teacher must be revered by the pupil, and towards relations fitting courtesy must be shown.

This is the ancient nature (of piety)—this leads to length of days, and according to this men must act.

### III. Not-killing.

Formerly, in the kitchen of His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King each day, many hundred thousands of living creatures were slaughtered to make curries. But now, when the pious edict is being written, only three living creatures are slaughtered (daily) for curry, to wit, two peacocks and one antelope ; the antelope, however, not invariably. Even these three living creatures henceforth shall not be slaughtered.

### IV. Pilgrimages.

In times past their Sacred Majesties used to go out on so-called ' tours of pleasure ', during which hunting and other similar amusements used to be practised.

His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King, however, after he had been consecrated ten years, went forth on the road to wisdom. Thus originated the ' tours of piety ' (*dharma*), wherein are practised the visiting of ascetics and Brahmins, with largesse of gold, the visiting of the people of the country, with instruction in the Law of Piety and discussion of the Law of Piety.

Consequently, since that time these are the pleasures of His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King in exchange for those of the past.

### V. The King's Remorse.

The Kalingas were conquered by His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King when he had been consecrated eight years. One hundred and fifty thousand persons were thence carried away captive, one hundred thousand were there slain, and many times that number perished.

Directly after the annexation of the Kalingas began His Sacred Majesty's zealous protection of the Law of Piety, his love of that law, and his giving instruction in that law (*dharma*). Thus arose His Sacred Majesty's remorse for having conquered the Kalingas, because the conquest of a country previously unconquered involves the slaughter, death, and carrying away captive of the people. That is a matter of profound sorrow and regret to his Sacred Majesty.

### VI. The Royal Example.

Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King :

'The Law of Piety is excellent.' But wherein consists the Law of Piety? In these things, to wit, little impiety, many good deeds, compassion, liberality, truthfulness, and purity.

The purity of spiritual insight I have given in manifold ways ; whilst on two-footed beings, on birds and the denizens of the waters, I have conferred various favours—even unto the boon of life ; and many other deeds have I done.

### VII. Royal Gifts.

Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King :

On the roads I have had banyan-trees planted to give shade to man and beast ; groves of mango-trees I have had planted ; at every half-*kos* I have caused wells to be dug ; rest-houses have been erected ; and numerous watering-places

have been provided by me here and there for the enjoyment of man and beast.

A small matter, however, is that so-called enjoyment.

With various blessings has mankind been blessed by former kings, as by me also ; by me, however, with the intent that men may conform to the Law of Piety, has it been done even as I thought.

### VIII. Asoka's Visit to the Birthplace of Gautama.

His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King, when he had been consecrated twenty years, having come in person, did reverence ; and, because 'Here Buddha was born, the Sakya sage', a great (?) railing of stone was prepared and a stone pillar erected.

Because 'Here the Venerable One was born', the village of Lummini was made free of religious cesses and declared entitled to the eighth share (of the produce claimed by the Crown).

### IX. The Problem of Suffering.

'As a man soweth, so shall he reap.'—*Milinda Pañha*, iii. 42.

Thus spake King Milinda : 'How comes it, reverend sir, that men are not alike ? Some live long, and some are short-lived ; some are hale, and some weak ; some comely, and some ugly ; some powerful, and some with no power ; some rich, some poor ; some born of noble stock, some meanly born ; some wise, and some foolish.'

To whom Nāgasena the Elder made answer :

'How comes it that all plants are not alike ? Some have a sour taste and some are salt, some are acrid, some bitter, and some sweet.'

'It must be, I take it, reverend sir, that they spring from various kinds of seed.'

'Even so, O Mahārāja, it is because of differences of





A GANDHARA SCULPTURE OF  
A BODHISATTVA

action that men are not alike : for some live long, and some are short-lived ; some are hale, and some weak ; some comely, and some ugly ; some powerful, and some without power ; some rich, some poor ; some born of noble stock, some meanly born ; some wise, and some foolish.'

### Some Significant Dates of this Period.

(After Vincent Smith.)

B. C.	
323	<i>Death of Alexander the Great.</i>
321	<i>Chandragupta, Emperor of India.</i>
303	<i>Treaty between Chandragupta and the Greeks.</i>
285	<i>Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt.</i>
273	<i>Accession of Asoka.</i>
269	<i>His coronation.</i>
264	<i>Outbreak of First Punic War.</i>
261	<i>Conquest of Kalingas.</i>
259	<i>Asoka abolishes the Royal Hunt, and begins his tours of piety.</i>
250	<i>Prince Mahinda's mission to Ceylon.</i>
249	<i>Pilgrimages to Buddhist holy places.</i>
240	<i>Asoka takes the yellow robe.</i>
? 239	<i>Buddhist council at Pataliputra : formation of Buddhist canon.</i>
231	<i>Death of Asoka.</i>

सत्यमेव जयते

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RISE OF THE NORTHERN SCHOOL (*circa* 100 B. C.—500 A. D.) AND THE DOWNFALL OF BUDDHISM IN INDIA (500—700 A. D.)

*‘The great school perpetuating God.’*

WITH Asoka’s death the Golden Age of Buddhism began to fade, as the Southern Buddhist maintains—to dawn, as the Northern Buddhist protests.

To understand this process a little secular history is necessary. For India now becomes a battle-ground of contending races, each in its turn influencing her religious life.

The  
Graeco-  
Bactrian  
Empire.

In the first place, when the strong hand of the Maurya kings was removed the Greek invasions from the north-west began anew, and a great Graeco-Bactrian Empire grew up. Greek and Indian culture became more intimately fused, and the art of this period begins to show unmistakable signs of Greek and even of Persian influence.

Figures of Buddha now for the first time began to be erected, and they are Greek in design with haloes and other signs of divinity. Bodhisattvas too (princely figures of the Buddhas in their heavenly births, before they have attained Buddhahood) were set up in great numbers, and it seems likely that the polytheism of Greece united with the natural tendency of the Indian mind to develop Buddhism from its primitive agnosticism to a polytheistic phase.

‘Never mind about the Gods!’ said Gautama. ‘We cannot help minding,’ replied the heart of India.

But another and more obvious influence was at work,

Mongolians from the far North, Huns of splendid physique and fierce courage, came pouring in over the great rampart of the Himālayas, and soon established a vast and powerful Empire—the Kushan, or Indo-Scythian Empire of the North-West, which had its capital at Peshāwar. These men were polytheists, and whilst they accepted much of the teachings of the Buddha they found in the Bodhisattvas ‘gods’ who might be approached at all times, and who helped their votaries to attain the goal. This goal itself underwent a change in conception. Just as the wild northern races admitted to Christianity brought into the Christian idea of Heaven their coarser beliefs in Valhalla (beliefs which still survive in such hymns as that describing

The  
Mongolian  
invasions.

Consequent  
changes in  
Buddhism.

The shout of them that triumph,  
The song of them that feast,)

so into Buddhism there entered with the Scythian converts a new ideal. A joyous Paradise took the place of the colder and more austere ideal of Nirvāna, and for most Buddhists it has kept its place as the goal for which they strive.

At this time, too, a still more important belief crept in. We have seen that Gautama taught men to look to no supreme God, but conceived the gods as good men promoted to a heaven, yet still in thrall of Karma. But now the idea of a Supreme Being, an Eternal Deity, Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, Infinite Light and Endless Life, began to appear, and by A. D. 100 it held a large place in man’s affections and beliefs. Of this Eternal God the historic Buddha is only a transitory manifestation, yet he is worshipped as a Saviour. And here it may be noted that albeit unintentionally Gautama himself left open a door for such worship: ‘he that would tend the sick,’ he is reported to have said, ‘let him minister to me.’

Moreover, to pray is a natural instinct of man, as natural to the soul as hunger to the body; there must be some

holier higher Being to whom a man may turn in his sin and weakness for strength and purity.

Thus the Buddhism of these Mongolian conquerors grew to be something very different from that of the founder of the religion.

It resembled Roman Christianity in its belief in one supreme Being, to be approached through the mediation of saints (Bodhisattvas), and in its conception of Heaven as a Paradise of bliss in the unveiled presence of God. It went on, as we shall see, to insist that men are saved by divine grace.

Another important change took place: Sanskrit was adopted instead of Pāli as the sacred language, and henceforth the writings of the Northern Buddhists were handed down in this form, which is to Pāli very much what Latin is to Italian.

Kanishka,  
*circa*  
A. D. 100.

The man who did for the new Buddhism what Asoka did for the earlier type was the Indo-Scythian Emperor Kanishka.<sup>1</sup> His date is still matter of controversy, but probably he came to the throne in the first century of the Christian era.

Like Asoka he summoned a great Buddhist Council to determine the form the religion should take.

This met at Jālandhara in Kashmir, and in spite of a strong conservative party the new Buddhism was definitely sanctioned and by A. D. 400 had become the prevalent faith of the Northern countries. Its adherents called it the *Mahā-yāna*, or the 'Great Vehicle', to distinguish it from the *Hīnayāna*, or 'Lesser Vehicle', for it claims to be a Broad Way leading many to Heaven, whereas the other is narrow and leads but few to Nirvāna. In the whole history of Buddhism there are only a handful for whom it is claimed that they have attained the far-off Goal.

Henceforth, then, there are two quite different types of Buddhism; yet for some centuries they continued to exist

<sup>1</sup> With the help of the great scholar Asvaghosa.

side by side, and Bhikkhus of both sects might even be found residing in the same monastery: for except in isolated instances Buddhism has never persecuted heretics, and at this early date the distinction was not very sharply made. The two different types of Buddhism.

But later a clean line of division was established, and the 'Lesser Vehicle' isolated itself in the South, spreading through Ceylon, which it had reached in 250 B.C., and through Burma, which it entered according to one account at the same time, according to another about A. D. 500.

The 'Greater Vehicle' claimed China, Japan, Korea, and Tibet.

And what of India, the land of its birth?

About A. D. 400 a Chinese pilgrim, Fa Hsian, visited it, and his journal, which survives to this day, is a valuable historical document which tells us much about the Buddhism of that time. It reveals the fact that whilst it had grown in power Indian Buddhism had lost in purity, and had become an idolatrous polytheism, calling on gods and spirits to help, and setting up numberless shrines. The life of Gautama has moreover become heavily incrustated with miraculous happenings, and the Bhikkhus have come to rely more and more upon supernatural powers, which they base upon a belief (totally un-Buddhistic) that the 'soul' of man is akin to that of God.

Soon a still stranger development took place. Gautama had tried to suppress the emotions and now they avenged themselves and appeared in a perverted form. Sexuality invaded Buddhism and a Tantric cult grew up, having images of female 'Buddhas', and associated with the vile rites which are so sternly denounced by the prophets of Israel in the worships of Moab and Ammon and Amalek. Buddhism in a word 'went a-whoring after strange gods', and this was the beginning of the end in India. The strength of the old Brahmanism, the ruthless might of the Huns, and

later the new power of Islam crushed it out of existence, and to-day it hardly exists in the land of its birth, though small Buddhist missions are seeking to re-establish it.

A visit  
to the  
Buddhist  
monuments  
in the  
Calcutta  
Museum.

The story of these developments and perversions is writ large upon the ancient monuments of Buddhism in India; and by way of summarizing something of what we have already learnt we may in imagination pay a visit to the archaeological section of the Calcutta Museum, where specimens of Buddhist sculpture are admirably arranged in chronological order.

The  
coffin of  
Gautama,  
*circa* 450  
B. C.

The first thing to see is probably the oldest and most interesting object of Indian sculpture—a simple massive stone-coffer, with no sign of symbol or image, which contained the charred ashes of the Buddha. A smaller, beautifully modelled stone casket, shaped like a stūpa and enshrining a crystal vessel, bears an inscription in Asokan characters recording the pious act of the Sākya in burying their great seer, and we are carried back in thought to the great Stoic, the Enlightened, who taught men to rely on themselves alone, to ‘work out their own salvation’.

Two  
Asokan  
pillars,  
*circa* 250  
B. C.

Two colossal pillars, one surmounted by a bull, another by a lion, tell us of the great Asoka, and then we pass on to a monument which amazes us by the beauty of its design and its admirable execution.

The  
Barhut rail,  
150 B. C.

It is part of the stone railing that surrounded a stūpa, or burial-mound, at Barhut, and belongs probably to the period 150 B. C., when the great impetus given to Buddhist art by Asoka was still at its height. Whilst the rail and gateway contain many symbols, Bo-trees, elephants, and ‘Wheels of the Law’, and many scenes from the ‘animal births’ of Gautama, and some of the legendary stories of his life as a man, it has no figure of him, and reminds us that for five or six centuries no images of the teacher were allowed. We may see too the story of the mission of Mahinda to Ceylon,

told in symbol, the Sacred Bo-tree being borne in procession flanked by the peacock of the Mauryas and the lion of the Sinhalese.<sup>1</sup>

We pass on to a later stage, and in a pillar from Benares see in a figure of Apollo and his four-horsed Sun-Chariot the beginnings of Greek influence, whilst here and there a Persian capital tells its own tale.

In a separate room are the wonderful sculptures of Gandhāra (now part of Afghanistan), the date of which is about A.D. 50-100. Here figures of Buddha and of Bodhisattvas abound, and we find Greek influence strongly marked in their flowing draperies and regular 'classical' features. An occasional strongly moulded Herakles, one wrestling with a lion, also suggests that Greek legends had found their way into India.

There too we may see the whole legendary life of Gautama told in elaborate carvings—his mother's dream that an elephant entered her womb, his birth and childhood, his renunciation of wife and child, the death of Kanthaka the horse, the donning of the yellow robe, the fasting, the enlightenment and temptation, the preaching tours and the Nirvāna, are all depicted.

We note too that he is thought of chiefly as Ascetic, with hand touching the earth in token of renunciation, as Seer, seated in repose with hands crossed in meditation, and as Teacher, with hand extended and forefinger and thumb expounding the Doctrine.

Here too are kings and animals worshipping him, and soon he begins to resemble more and more closely the Hindu god Vishnu.

Last of all, female figures of Tārā, 'the mother,' appear,

<sup>1</sup> A cast of a similar gateway is in the South Kensington Museum, and is well worth a visit.



Tantric  
figures,  
A. D.  
550-700.

and other female figures with many arms and exaggerated physical development.

Thus we can read the story of Buddhism in India, its rise and fall, written large upon her ancient monuments ; a story which goes to prove very conclusively that man needs a God, and if he is denied one will deify his hero.

And now, before we pass on to see how the Northern and Southern schools developed in the lands they won, it may be well to inquire what common ground exists between the two types.

Doctrines  
held in  
common by  
the two  
schools.

A Buddhist catechism, published by the Theosophists and written by the late 'Colonel' Olcott, who did much to revivify Buddhism in the South, claims that there are fourteen propositions to which all educated Buddhists agree. This claim is just ; it is borne out by representatives of the Buddhism of Japan, Burma, Ceylon, and Chittagong, and these fourteen propositions are a very useful summary of the tenets of Buddhism, which will repay careful study.

Yet it is worthy of note that from this summary the essential doctrine that man is his own saviour has to be omitted, for most Buddhists do not believe it ; and that the definition of Nirvāna is so vague that it might equally be applied to the Christian idea of Heaven !

In other words, the summary is a proof that the Northern school differs fundamentally from the Southern : for its stoical self-reliance, its agnosticism, and its doctrine of Nirvāna are the chief points that differentiate Buddhism from the Hinduism out of which it sprang ; and Northern Buddhism is perhaps nearer to Hinduism than to the Buddhism of Gautama. To sum up :

Primitive Buddhism was agnostic ; *Mahāyāna* Buddhism is theistic or polytheistic.

Primitive Buddhism trusted only in salvation by man's

own effort ; *Mahāyāna* Buddhism trusts also in the help of God.

Primitive Buddhism believed in countless transmigrations before Nirvāna was reached ; *Mahāyāna* Buddhism holds that men may pass at once into Paradise through faith.

And to these three points of difference may be added a fourth, in which *Mahāyāna* Buddhism approaches more nearly to Christianity than Primitive Buddhism—it holds that man's duty is not to retire from the world and seek his own salvation, but rather to live in the world and seek salvation for others ; this is the highest virtue.

#### SUMMARY OF FUNDAMENTAL BUDDHIST BELIEFS COMMON TO BOTH SCHOOLS.

(From 'Colonel' Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism*.)

I. Buddhists are taught to show the same tolerance, forbearance, and brotherly love to all men, without distinction, and an unswerving kindness towards the members of the animal kingdom.

II. The universe was evolved, not created ; and it functions according to law, not according to the caprice of any God.<sup>1</sup>

III. The truths upon which Buddhism is founded are natural. They have, we believe, been taught in successive *kalpas*, or world-periods, by certain illuminated beings called BUDDHAS, the name BUDDHA meaning 'Enlightened'.

IV. The fourth Teacher in the present *kalpa* was Sākya Muni, or Gautama Buddha, who was born in a royal family

<sup>1</sup> The Christian also believes that the world is controlled by law ; but he believes also that the law emanates from a Law-giver.

in India about 2,500 years ago. He is an historical personage, and his name was Siddārtha Gautama.

V. Sākya Muni taught that ignorance produces desire, unsatisfied desire is the cause of rebirth, and rebirth the cause of sorrow. To get rid of sorrow, therefore, it is necessary to escape rebirth ; to escape rebirth, it is necessary to extinguish desire ; and to extinguish desire, it is necessary to destroy ignorance.

VI. Ignorance fosters the belief that rebirth is a necessary thing. When ignorance is destroyed the worthlessness of every such rebirth, considered as an end in itself, is perceived, as well as the paramount need of adopting a course of life by which the necessity of such repeated rebirths can be abolished. Ignorance also begets the illusive and illogical idea that there is only one existence for man, and the other illusion that this one life is followed by states of unchangeable pleasure or torment.

VII. The dispersion of all this ignorance can be attained by the persevering practice of an all-embracing altruism in conduct, development of intelligence, wisdom in thought, and destruction of desire for the lower personal pleasures.

VIII. The desire to live being the cause of rebirth, when that is extinguished rebirths cease and the perfect individual attains by meditation that highest state of peace called *Nirvāna*.

IX. Sākya Muni taught that ignorance can be dispelled and sorrow removed by the knowledge of the four Noble Truths, viz :

1. The misery of existence.
2. The cause productive of misery, which is the desire, ever renewed, of satisfying oneself without being able ever to secure that end.
3. The destruction of that desire, or the estranging of oneself from it.

4. The means of obtaining this destruction of desire. The means that he pointed out is called the Noble Eightfold Path, viz. : Right Belief, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Means of Livelihood, Right Exertion, Right Remembrance, Right Meditation.

X. Right Meditation leads to spiritual enlightenment, or the development of that Buddha-like faculty which is latent in every man.

XI. The essence of Buddhism, as summed up by the Tathāgata (Buddha) himself, is :

To cease from all sin.

To get virtue.

To purify the heart.

XII. The universe is subject to a natural causation known as *Karma*. The merits and demerits of a being in past existences determine his condition in the present one. Each man, therefore, has prepared the causes of the effects which he now experiences.

XIII. The obstacles to the attainment of good *karma* may be removed by the observance of the following precepts, which are embraced in the moral code of Buddhism, viz. : (1) Kill not ; (2) Steal not ; (3) Indulge in no forbidden sexual pleasures ; (4) Lie not ; (5) Take no intoxicating or stupefying drug or liquor. Five other precepts which need not be here enumerated should be observed by those who would attain, more quickly than the average layman, the release from misery and rebirth.

XIV. Buddhism discourages superstitious credulity. Gautama Buddha taught it to be the duty of a parent to have his child educated in science and literature. He also taught that no one should believe what is spoken by any sage, written in any book, or affirmed by tradition, unless it accord with reason.

## ILLUSTRATIVE READINGS

## I. Buddhist Incarnation.

(From Mr. J. N. Farquhar's *Primer of Hinduism*.)

Gautama the Buddha speaks :

‘An inconceivable number of thousands of *kotis* of aeons, never to be measured, is it since I reached superior enlightenment and never ceased to teach the law.

‘I roused many Bodhisattvas and established them in Buddha-knowledge. I brought myriads of *kotis* of beings, endless, to full ripeness in many *kotis* of aeons.

‘I show the place of extinction, I reveal to all beings a device to educate them, albeit I do not become extinct at the time, and in this very place continue preaching the law.

‘Repeatedly am I born in the world of the living.

‘What reasons should I have to continually manifest myself? When men become unbelieving, unwise, ignorant, careless, fond of sensual pleasures, and from thoughtlessness run into misfortune.

‘Then I, who know the course of the world, declare, “I am the Tathāgata,” and consider, How can I incline them to enlightenment? How can they become partakers of the Buddha laws?

‘So I am the Father of the world, the Self-born, the Healer, the Protector of all creatures. Knowing them to be perverted, infatuated, and ignorant, I teach final rest, myself not being at rest.’

(From the *Saddharma Pundarikā*.)

(NOTE ESPECIALLY THE LAST PARAGRAPH.)

## II. Opening Hymn of 'The Awakening of Faith'.

I yield my life to the All,  
To the ALL SOUL, full of good,  
In wisdom all complete,  
In power all divine,  
In pity—would save all.

To LAW which does embody  
The Archetype of all.

To CHURCH which does contain  
The Archetype in Seed.

That men may be delivered  
From doubt and evil ways ;  
Get Faith in the great School  
Perpetuating God !

(Asvaghosa : Translated by Dr. Timothy Richard.)

### Some Significant Dates of this Period.

184 B. C.	<i>Fall of the Asokan Empire.</i>
100 B. C.	<i>Images are introduced into Buddhism.</i>
44 B. C.	Death of Julius Caesar.
29 A. D.	Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
29-150 A. D.	Formation of the New Testament Scriptures.
100 A. D.	<i>Kanishka and the Kushan Empire.</i>
	<i>Beginnings of Mahāyāna Buddhism : Asvaghosa.</i>
200 A. D.	Christianity first brought to India.
300-350 A. D.	Christianity accepted as the Religion of the Roman Empire.
	Constantine the Great.
400-500 A. D.	<i>The Great Buddhist Scholars :</i>
	<i>Buddhaghosa puts the Pāli Scriptures into written form.</i>
	<i>Buddhism enters Korea and Japan.</i>
	<i>The Huns invade India and persecute the Buddhists.</i>
600-700 A. D.	Rise of Muhammadanism.
	<i>Buddhism in Tibet, Siam, and Burma.</i>

## CHAPTER V

### BUDDHISM IN THE SOUTH

#### A. IN CEYLON

*'By the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified in His sight.'*

The  
civilizing  
power of  
Buddhism.

THE missions of King Asoka are amongst the greatest civilizing influences in the world's history ; for they entered countries for the most part barbarous and full of superstition, and amongst these animistic peoples Buddhism spread as a wholesome leaven.

The history of Ceylon and Burma, as of Siam, Japan, and Tibet, may be said to begin with the entrance into them of Buddhism ; and in these lands it spread far more rapidly and made a far deeper impression than in China with its already ancient civilization.

As to-day Christianity spreads very rapidly amongst the animistic peoples of Africa, and India, and the South Sea Islands, exerting a strong influence and replacing superstition and chaos by a reasonable belief in One God and an orderly universe, so Buddhism in these eastern lands has exerted a beneficent influence by putting Karma, the law of cause and effect, in the place of the caprice of demons and tribal gods, and a lofty system of morals in the place of tribal custom and *taboo*.

The Buddhist missionaries, moreover, brought with them much of the culture of their own land. It seems clear, for instance, that it was Mahinda who brought into Ceylon the arts of stone carving and of irrigation which his father had so successfully practised in India ; and the Ceylon

Buddhist of to-day thinks of his religion as the force to which his country owes the greatness of her past history.

Let us consider the story of Buddhism in each of these lands in turn, paying special attention to the religion as it is to-day; for though exaggerated statements are often made with regard to the strength of modern Buddhism, yet it is a religion which still exerts enormous influence, and the Buddha is revered by scores of millions as the ideal man and the greatest of sages. <sup>Its strength.</sup>

#### SECTION I.

For over 2,000 years Ceylon has been the land of a religion, 'a theocracy without a God'.

Not far from the ruined city of Anuradhapura a lovely Mahinda. rocky hill rises out of a dense sea of jungle, and here is the rock-hewn 'study' and the tomb of the great and gentle prince Mahinda, who about 250 B. C. brought Buddhism to Ceylon.

From that day to this Buddhism has been the dominant religion of the island. Its king, Tissa, entered into alliance with Asoka, and did all he could to foster the religion of Gautama; and he and his successors built the great Sacred City of Anuradhapura, in which vast hill-like dāgobas, higher than St. Paul's Cathedral and covering many acres of ground, rear their mighty domes above the trees of a royal park and royal baths and palaces given to the Sangha.

The Buddhism thus established continued to hold sway in Ceylon, and though Tamil invasions from the mainland drove the Buddhist kings out of the Sacred City, yet the later Tamil kings themselves found it politic to adopt the religion of the country; and in the twelfth century A. D., Parākrama Bāhu, a great Tamil king, built a new Sacred City <sup>Buddhism the national religion.</sup>



at Polannaruwa that vied in splendour with the older capital.<sup>1</sup> Through all these centuries the Sangha continued to play a very large part in the destinies of the country, and large monasteries grew up, ruled over by powerful 'abbots'. These were for the most part homes of learning and piety, and the Sangha was much honoured, so that to-day they own one-third of the arable land of the island.

Transcription of the Pāli books.

Ceylon has the honour of having first transcribed the Pāli books; the great commentator Buddhaghosa, in the fourth century A. D., rendered the current Sinhalese books back into Pāli, their original tongue. Thus the present version of the Sacred Books of Southern Buddhism belongs to a date almost 900 years after the passing of Gautama Buddha, and there is no doubt that later accretions have been included.

We find, for instance, pessimistic prophecies attributed to the Buddha, that his religion would gradually die away—prophecies, probably, of some keen observer of a later date who by the fourth century A. D. already saw traces of decay and death.

The scholastic lists and summaries found in the books may also belong to this period, and are the dead bones of what was once a living system.

The *Mahāwamsa*.

To Ceylon Buddhism belongs also one of the greatest historical chronicles in the world, the *Mahāwamsa*, which, though it is written from the standpoint of the Sangha, is a fairly reliable history of Ceylon; by its aid we can repeople her dead cities with splendid throngs of yellow-robed abbots and 'monks', to whom kings and courtiers bow down.

The 7,774 Bhikkhus who to-day keep alive the religion are thus descendants in an unbroken succession of the

<sup>1</sup> See illustrative reading at the end of the chapter.

great Mahinda himself, and in Ceylon monasticism has had a unique chance of proving its worth.

In order that we may the better realize the present state of the religion in this lovely island, let us set over against one another two typical scenes, which will serve to introduce us to an atmosphere morally and intellectually strange.<sup>1</sup>

Two  
symbolical  
scenes.

## SECTION II.

We pass by winding paths and steep flights of rock-hewn steps into the peaceful fragrant courtyard of a Buddhist Vihāra. At once we are in an atmosphere remote from the world : hardly a sound breaks the heavy stillness, except when the leaves of the great Bo-tree rustle in the breeze, or the plaintive 'other-worldly' chanting of the Buddhist Slokas reaches us from the Pansala, or dwelling-place of the Bhikkhus. Before us stretches a wonderful panorama of paddy-fields and coco-nut estates, green in the foreground and passing into opalescent blues and greys in the distance, and beyond are blue hills and the great peak of Sripada, the sacred mountain of Buddhism, where is a colossal footprint of the Buddha, revered and even worshipped by countless thousands, and visited every year by many a white-robed company of pilgrims. Behind is the rock-hewn shrine, dark and mysterious, in which reposes a colossal image of the Buddha, a symbol of calm meditation and kindness which epitomizes the Buddhist ideal of character. A yellow-robed Bhikkhu comes forward gravely and ushers us into the shrine ; and there is ample time to note his keen and stoical face and his bearing of conscious dignity. Do the broad acres below not belong to his Vihāra, and is he not the spiritual lord of all the country-

The  
Bhikkhu.

<sup>1</sup> Parts of the following chapter are taken from an article written by the author for *The International Review of Missions* (April, 1914).

side and an able scholar of the Pāli books? His companion is younger and stouter, heavy-jowled and stupid in expression, clearly a villager who has taken the yellow robe rather from force of circumstances than because of any 'vocation' to the office; and he knows little of the books or of the history of the place.

His  
temple.

But it is well worth study; and the elder Bhikkhu is able to explain its frescoes—pictures of the legendary lives of Gautama, his former existences in many an animal form, his sacrifices of himself for others, his 'incarnation' as Wessantara, the prince who gave wife and children to a hunchbacked Brahman,<sup>1</sup> his miraculous birth as the Buddha, his renunciation of home and wealth, his enlightenment and his labours as a preacher, and lastly his attainment of Nirvāṇa. All this is recorded in red and yellow mural paintings; and here, too, is Ānanda, his personal attendant, and Maitri or Metteyya, the coming Buddha, who in the distant future shall revive the religion and carry on his work.

Here, too, are pictures which have an even more vital meaning to the great bulk of the pilgrims who visit the shrine; pictures, as the younger monk smilingly explains, of the tortures of the wicked in their next birth; and when the people have knelt before the Bo-tree and offered their candles and their flowers at the shrine, the parents will explain them to the children, not failing to point the moral. Here is a liar whose tongue is being torn out with red-hot pincers: here a low-caste man is being crushed under great rocks for speaking rudely to a feudal superior: here the unfaithful wife is climbing a tree of jagged spikes whilst demon-torturers thrust her through with tridents and spears.

By the portals of the shrine stand figures of Hindu gods,

<sup>1</sup> See Illustrative Reading I, at end of Chapter VI.

DEVIL DANCERS IN CEYLON



Sakra and Vishnu, humble attendants upon the Buddha within : is not greater than any god ?

With all its quiet and its solemnity there is something monstrous about this cavern-shrine, and we are glad to escape from the heavy damp air, impregnated with the odour of bats and tallow candles, of camphor and jasmine, and to pass into the village street below, where are bustle and life and the normal activities of man.

Let us accompany the Bhikkhu on his begging-round. His As he stands silent, with downcast eyes, before each house, begging-round, the men stare stolidly at him : they do not love him and his Order though they respect his cloth, and tacitly accept the teaching that the Sangha is the harvest-field of merit. But the women are more faithful, or more credulous, and his bowl is well filled with rice and curry and 'other delights'.

These he accepts with no word of thanks, and no request passes his lips : does he not confer a favour upon the faithful donor ?

So we leave him, silent, aloof, and a little proud, a drone in practice if not in theory, who later will repay their alms by reciting unintelligible passages from the Pāli books, or chanting Pirit to drive out a snake or a demon. Here his pastoral duties end, and for the rest he is conning the sacred books, and possibly giving fitful instruction in Sinhalese reading and writing to a handful of village children.

What do they and their parents know of Buddhism ? The laity. They all know the meaning of Karma and transmigration and the idea of merit is deeply ingrained in them : the five precepts—to abstain from killing, adultery, lying, and stealing, and to take no strong drink—they also know, and something of the life-story of the Buddha : but the practice of meditation and the goal, Nirvāna—these are not for

them; and to be reborn to a happy human life or to become a deva or god—this is their ambition, indeed it is the ambition of the vast bulk of the Bhikkhus. The atmosphere of the lives, intellectual and moral, of the poorer class of Ceylon villager has been admirably suggested in a pen-portrait by Mr. L. S. Woolf: ‘It was a strange world, a world of bare and brutal facts, of superstition, of grotesque imagination; a world of trees and the perpetual twilight of their shade; a world of hunger and fear and devils, where a man was helpless before the unseen and unintelligible forces surrounding him.’

And this world of demonism is inextricably blended with the life of even the more intelligent villagers: with it Buddhism has entered into an unholy alliance. For whilst Buddhism has undoubtedly ennobled the animistic peoples, it has become contaminated by their aboriginal beliefs.

To express something of what this ‘Buddhism’ of the majority of Ceylon Buddhists stands for, I may be allowed to quote an account I have given elsewhere of what happens when a villager falls sick, for it epitomizes much of the strange mixture which holds the allegiance of three-quarters of the Sinhalese.

A layman  
in distress.

Kalu Banda falls sick; his wife calls in the wedarāla, or native doctor, and goes to the temple (if she be an unusually devout Buddhist) with an offering of flowers. The wedarāla prescribes a concoction of herbs; and if the case is a difficult one, advises that the astrologer be also consulted. (Many wedarālas are themselves astrologers, and a few combine a considerable knowledge of Western science with implicit belief in the ‘influence’ of the stars upon human destiny; or again, an astrologer may be also a Buddhist Bhikkhu.) Kalu Banda’s wife goes to the astrologer armed with his horoscope, and from this he tells her the nature of the disease and advises her as to its

treatment. Meantime the family are busy with their own diagnosis. 'It must be a demon,' says his daughter. 'Or a star,' says his mother-in-law. 'It is my Karma anyhow,' says the patient. 'If I get well within a week I vow 100 candles at the Kelani temple' (or at Adam's Peak).

The wife now arrives, bringing the advice of the astrologer, and calls in either the Kattādiya (devil-dancer and enchanter) or the Buddhist Bhikkhus. The former examines the patient; if he has a headache or any other nervous ailment, he uses charms which often prove efficacious; if it is some other trouble, a devil-dance is begun and carried on with great vigour. If it is the Bhikkhus who are called in, they recite Pirit, the orthodox ceremony for such cases. This may prove effectual; for the people look upon it as magic, and their implicit faith is a patent thing: in a few cases it actually replaces evil influences in the mind by good ones, fixing the attention of the patient upon Buddha rather than upon himself. In nervous cases it is especially effectual: yet most Buddhists resort to it only after they have tried all other means!

But supposing Kalu Banda has some infectious illness, the treatment is quite different.

Such epidemics as small-pox or chicken-pox are supposed to be in the control of the goddess Pattini, and it is the Kapurāla, or priest, who is called in in such cases. He will pray to the goddess, or advise that some ceremony be performed to appease the particular demon; or will offer a goat or a fowl. (Yet killing is the greatest of sins!)

How real a grip these demons have on the people may be estimated by the well-attested facts that, (1) until lately there lived in Kandy an old woman who had escaped with her life after being offered to the local demon. Every year a young virgin was bound to a stake and left for a whole night. As a rule these girls died of fear. But this one

escaped, because her lover spent the night with her and cheered her during the ordeal, a very terrible one to a Sinhalese woman. (2) A grandfather, on seeing that his daughter had brought forth a child with teeth and hair already grown, smashed its head, crying, 'It is a devil!'

With such degrading superstitions has Buddhism formed an unholy alliance. Even an orthodox Buddhist will do meritorious actions to appease demons: he will invoke the demon in the name of the Buddha, or will make an offering in the temple to gain merit for himself and for the demon, who is also in the clutches of Karma.

But to return to Kalu Banda. All these varied methods have failed; the demon is not to be appeased. So the trump-card is played. The patient pretends to die; and the family even go through a mock funeral ceremony. The demon is perhaps a fool, and will now go away satisfied that he has wreaked full vengeance upon his victim.

Such then are the two 'spheres' of Buddhism in Ceylon; the Bhikkhu to meditate, the layman to toil and suffer until he too realizes that all is sorrow, and enters upon the life of the recluse. Then he will at any rate have his feet set upon the lowest rung of the ladder of Nirvāna. What are the vital forces of this religion, which still, in the words of the Census Report of 1911, 'has an enormous hold upon a very large proportion of the people of Ceylon'?

### SECTION III.

The upbringing of a Buddhist boy in Ceylon.

We may attempt to answer this question by describing the upbringing of a typical Kandyan Buddhist boy. Until he is seven or eight years old he is not taught anything of his religion; but he is surrounded by picturesque scenes which sink into his consciousness and make a deep and permanent



impression. The yellow-robed Bhikkhus, who come to his father's house to ask alms or to cast out a demon or to say Pirit when his elder brother is about to leave home for college, make a strong appeal to the sense of colour which is a large part of the consciousness of a child. Something, too, in the reverence with which his mother treats them and in the melancholy sound of their teaching makes its appeal to deep-seated religious feelings, which he does not understand, but which are real enough.

Then there are torchlight processions, and pilgrimages in which he travels in state on his father's elephant, and he is filled with the glamour of a long happy picnic in the bright sunny air; and the old rock-temple, with its dim colossal figures half hidden in the murky atmosphere of the cave, speaks of the mysterious and the unseen.

Gradually there forms in his mind the figure of a hero, calm, strong, kindly, whom his people reverence and even seem to worship. As he grows older he learns the doctrine of Merit, and the motive of self-interest comes in and pervades his religious thinking. Gifts must be offered to the Bhikkhus, candles burnt before the Buddha-image, pilgrimages made and the poor fed—in order that merit may be acquired and the offerer may be reborn in a happier sphere. He is taught to restrain his natural instinct to kill, and as he returns flushed and happy one day carrying a dead rock-squirrel, frescoes upon the temple walls rebuke him, and his father shows him the tortures that await him in the next world, when it will be the squirrel's turn. May he not be reborn as a mouse, and the squirrel as a cat? He shrugs his shoulders, saying, 'It's worth the risk!' and his father wakes up to the fact that his boy is growing up without instruction in the Buddhist books. So a fitful attempt is made to remedy the evil: he is sent daily to the Bhikkhu, and learns some of the Jātakas (animal birth-stories), until the lessons

Appeal of  
Buddhism  
to his  
imagina-  
tion.

A pilgrim-  
age.

The  
Buddha-  
Image.  
The  
doctrine of  
Merit.

'Not-  
killing.'

He sits at  
the feet  
of the  
Bhikkhu.

The dawn-  
ing of hero-  
worship  
and  
gratitude.

of Karma and transmigration have sunk deep into his soul. He also begins to know some of the moral teachings of Gautama, to take the Five Precepts daily, and to learn Pāli sentences by heart; and when he is about thirteen or fourteen his instinct for hero-worship awakens, and centres in the figure of Gautama Buddha, of whom he thinks as a prince giving up all for the sake of a sad and sinful world. So gratitude—perhaps the strongest of religious motives—is born, and loyalty, the strongest thing in a boy, attaches itself to the national hero.

Thus in the boy's consciousness Buddhism is beginning to play a vital part, and we may sum up so far by saying that the doctrine of Karma and transmigration—popularized as the idea of Merit—the fact of Gautama Buddha, and the strong sensuous appeal to the imagination, are the chief vital forces of Buddhism in the life of this Ceylon boy, as of most of his people.

A Sinha-  
lese New  
Year.

At the Sinhalese New Year in April, when the Buddha's birthday, his renunciation, and his enlightenment are all commemorated, he goes up to Kandy or to Colombo and enjoys all the fun of the fair. Here are religious observances, 'Wesak carols' in honour of the Buddha, and transparencies in honour of the 'Triple Gem' (the Buddha, his Law and his Order), and for the rest there are shooting-galleries, and 'lucky-dips' and fireworks and much eating. At such festivals as this he learns to think of Buddhism as not merely the religion of his home but as his national religion; the religion which has made his country great, and which is still a bond of union and good fellowship.

The  
Perahera.

If one wishes to see the Sinhalese schoolboy at his best, one should watch him at the annual Perahera in Kandy, which is a thing of pomp and beauty with its slow-moving elephants in scarlet and gold, its weird torchlight, its fantastic dances, and the wild melancholy of its barbaric music. The

Kandyan boy will gaze spell-bound, his eye kindling and his chest swelling with pride in this epitome of a civilization which is passing away, but is still very dear. And to become a Christian means to give up all personal share in this and much else, to lose his feudal position, to sacrifice the rich perquisites of the temple trusteeship,—hardest of all, to be called renegade and traitor by one's nearest and dearest : . . . 'except a man take up his cross daily.' . . . Yet the young Kandyans, knowing all this, are being compelled by the appeal of a higher beauty and a deeper allegiance. Let all who persevere so far in this chapter pray for a mass-movement amongst these sons of the hills in whom a romantic and passionate nature promises rich soil for the fruits of the Christian character. Even as I write, comes the news of the baptism of four of the most promising of them, and during the past five years some 25 have been added to the Church, all of them pupils at Trinity College, Kandy, whilst other colleges can tell of similar experiences.

The fact, then, that Buddhism is the national religion, Patriotism. the religion of over 2,000 years in the country's history, is another vital force in Ceylon Buddhism. For it was Buddhism which built their ancient cities and gave them their literature. Conservatism, therefore, and pride of race are fighting on behalf of Buddhism, and it remains for Christian preachers and writers to prove that the Gospel is the fulfilment of the Law of Gautama, no less than of that of Moses, and that their national aspirations will find fullest and freest expression in a modern state such as Christianity alone can construct.

But to return to our Buddhist boy : his father finds he is getting too old for the village school, and he sends him to At a public school. the big missionary college or public school where he will be taught by Englishmen, and improve his chances of advancement in Government service. Moreover there are

signs that the boy needs discipline and moral training and a wider life.

He now passes into a new and strange world, in which he feels at first lost and desperately homesick. At times he is happy playing 'cricket', at which he shows marvellous aptitude with his supple wrist and quick eye; but at others a wild yearning for his jungle home, his elephants and bulls, comes over him. His European clothes, several sizes too big for him, are irksome and clumsy, and the class-room is narrow and dull: he longs for the freedom of the long sunny days at home.

Moreover at home he is a small prince, with servants to fetch and carry for him and an assured position: here he is one of a crowd, a humble member of it; and though he likes his teachers they are strangers and taskmasters.

The  
corporate  
life.  
Responsi-  
bility.

But soon a sense of the corporate spirit of the place comes over him: he is ready for responsibility and he likes the way men trust him and give him things to do. The gang-spirit in him responds to the dormitory life, and somehow there is a friendliness and security about it all which is new and good. He likes the evening hour, when there are games and 'yarns', followed by the quiet evening prayers; and these, though he does not understand much, fill him with a sense of other-worldly peace, and he falls asleep no longer afraid of 'Yakkhas' or ghosts. Then he joins the Union for Social Service, and learns to find happiness in simple acts of kindness to the poor and sick, and a higher patriotism awakens in him.

Dormitory  
prayers.

The religious teaching, too, he likes (though he feels that Buddhism is better in its strong emphasis upon temperance and 'not-killing'), and soon a figure of beauty and strength seems to form in his subconsciousness, and the appeal of Christ begins to assert itself in the school chapel and the Bible class. He resists it at first, and he may grow up

resisting it, strengthened by the warnings of parents and Bhikkhus to have nothing to do with 'an alien faith'; but he feels he is at the parting of the ways. He sees that these Christians are unselfish, and that they work together loyally for a common cause: he thinks he will try and put some of this spirit into Buddhism. But when he returns home he finds it is not there, and there seems no way of fostering it. His father, too, whom he respects and loves, falls short in many ways he cannot help noticing; and the Bhikkhus do not lead really good or effective lives.

He tells his elder brother he is half convinced that Christianity is true, and that he is learning the secret of prayer. The brother loses his temper and tells him that Christianity is false and foreign, that it is immoral in its teaching that men can go on sinning and be forgiven again and again, and that the Law of Karma alone can explain why some are rich and some are poor, some ugly and some handsome, some healthy and others sickly.

So he goes back to college determined to resist the Christian influence, and armed with some posers for his teachers.

Their answers do not wholly satisfy him—for who but the Buddhist can give a mathematical reason for the sufferings of mankind? Yet he would like to believe in a Father God: he finds that prayer is a great reality, and the Christian teaching of one life on earth and a reunion of dead friends in heaven appeals strongly to his heart; and Nirvāna does not attract him.

Moreover he finds that no one in his country that he has heard of is really seeking to attain Nirvāna in this life, and he is told by all whom he asks that it cannot be done.

So if he is sincere he must either become a Christian and follow the Christ whose kingly figure so attracts him, or else he must become a Bhikkhu and see if Nirvāna cannot

really be attained and meditation really practised as in the good old days.

I think of two pupils of my own, who were very great friends. Both belonged to highly-placed families ; both ran neck and neck for three-quarters of their school career ; both were strongly influenced for Christ. Then came the parting of the ways ; and one goes forth to preach Christ, one to become a Bhikkhu, until he realizes that Nirvāna is not a living hope, and either sinks into the apathy of the daily routine or forsakes the life of the recluse. For the one there is poverty and persecution, but joy and progress ; for the other a grand ceremony as he takes the yellow robe, and respect and reverence all his days, at any rate from the women-folk, but sadness and apathy and stagnation.

For the one is in a minority, but he has God on his side ; the other joins the majority, but they are separated from God, and therefore without hope in the world. Buddhism, if the hope of Nirvāna be gone from it, is a pessimistic religion ; and its only hope as it now exists in Ceylon is centred upon the Coming One, Maitri, the Buddha of Love. Till he shall come, Ceylon Buddhists—Bhikkhu and layman alike—confess that they have no spirit to live up to the difficult moral ideal set before them, still less to follow those mystical practices of meditation which are said to lead on to Nirvāna and which are the very kernel of Buddhism. As one of Bishop Copleston's correspondents put it, 'These things are very non-existent'. All would-be reformers acknowledge and bewail this fact, and even the late Venerable Srī Sumangala, who was cremated with almost royal honours, was held by Buddhists not yet to have entered the path to emancipation—Sowan. The Bhikkhus one and all maintain that it is impossible now to reach Nirvāna, for the religion has entered upon a stage of degeneration prophesied, as they believe, by Gautama Buddha himself, when such

attainment is no longer possible. 'We are walking in darkness,' said a Buddhist leader in Ceylon, 'without seeing a light, a person, or a hope.' 'Nirvāna', said a Burman Bhikkhu, 'is a fearsome thought! I have no hope of attaining it.'

## SECTION IV.

We come then to the striking fact that whilst Ceylon <sup>Decay at the core.</sup> Buddhism has vital forces of great power, yet here at the very heart of it is decay and death. And in the concluding <sup>Vital forces of the Gospel.</sup> section we may attempt to show how the vital forces of the Gospel may triumph where Buddhism has failed.

(1) In the first place, it is clear that whilst Nirvāna is a <sup>Heaven</sup> vague and ill-defined and unattainable ideal, the Christian heaven, if it be adequately preached, cannot fail to attract their hearts and to appeal to their reasons. They are already convinced that a life in a 'heaven' is a reality attainable by the good man; and they long to be assured of the possibility of reunion with their dear ones. According to Buddhism, this is only a bare possibility and can at best be but a temporary joy: if the Karma of the persons is identical, they will be reborn under similar conditions, possibly in the same family.

(2) As with Nirvāna, so with the method of attaining it. <sup>Prayer.</sup> The practice of meditation, which is the very kernel of Buddhism, is almost a dead letter in Ceylon; and the people want something to put in its place. They do in fact 'pray'—whether they will acknowledge it or not—and one may see them kneeling abstracted and devout in front of the Bo-tree. They pray for material benefits in this world (though this is not orthodox), or they pray to be reborn to see Maitri Buddha and attain Nirvāna.

But they do not claim that their prayers are answered.

Now Christianity is essentially the religion of prayer, and it is often the fact of answered prayer that brings Buddhists to Christ. For if prayer be efficacious, then Karma must go : if things can be got by asking, then the world is not merely a closed system of rigid natural law.

Communion with the risen Christ.

(3) Connected with prayer is the mysticism essential to Christianity. Communion with the living Christ—this surely may be offered very definitely in place of the far-off hope of the coming Buddha. Buddhists listen reverently to such preaching, and the wistfulness of some of their faces is very touching : they realize that their own 'righteousness is as filthy rags'.

' Perfect love casteth out fear.'

(4) Moreover, just as He found acceptance in Galilee and in the Roman Empire as the Saviour from powers of darkness, so to the demon-haunted villagers of Ceylon He may be proved to have still His ancient power.

These four points may be summarized by saying that Christianity is a vital religion in proportion as it is 'miraculous' ; and only in so far as it is vital can it hope to replace a religion as strong as Buddhism. It is not a moral system that Buddhists want, for that they already possess : it is a living, vital power for conquest and victory—victory over death and sin, and the fear of demons and the power of circumstance. Such are the implications of the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. His kingdom is the kingdom not merely of Law but of Grace.

Social service.

(5) Again, if Christianity is indeed a life, it will manifest itself in social service : it must prove itself to be not a de-nationalizing and disintegrating force but a nation-building power. The great doctrine of the Brotherhood of Man is accepted by Buddhists, but not much practised. Christianity alone has a sufficiently constraining motive, for it sees in the leper and in the outcast 'a brother for whom Christ died'. Works of healing are an essential part of the Gospel



message, and yet Ceylon has at present no medical mission ! The work lately started for the deaf and blind is already proving a valuable bit of apologetic, and the wonderfully courageous purity campaign lately carried out in Colombo has also given the Buddhists furiously to think ; whilst such practical social Christianity as the corporate life of the mission schools and of the Young Men's Christian Association (which is rapidly becoming indigenous) does much to convince Buddhists that Christianity has forces of cohesion which are not found in Buddhism. The fact, moreover, that Christian efforts are sustained and progressive makes Buddhists realize that they are lacking in something that makes for united and long-sustained effort. The Christian community of Ceylon number ten per cent. of the total population, a very high proportion compared with India, and if they be really living Christians, then the victory is assured ; and to vitalize the Christian community and to send out leaders with a living experience—this must be the first task of the Church in Ceylon.

Whilst then Ceylon has splendid work to offer to foreign missionaries on the staffs of her public schools, and pioneer work in the Maldivé Islands and in the centre of the Western Province, where a medical missionary could do untold good, yet, on the whole, she cannot be called a needy field. Already some 270 European missionaries (about half of them Roman Catholics) are at work, and there is a growing national spirit in the Christian Church. She is asking that her native Christian leaders be given the best possible training, and money is urgently needed to found a training colony planned by the Principal of Trinity College, Kandy, which shall send out to the villages men trained in agriculture and the rudiments of medicine to be true 'pastors' of these needy people, and to free them from the bondage of fear and disease and debts.

Such is the work of His Church who came that men might have more abundant life.

Another great and noble work that is calling for able and devoted men is the production of a sound, liberal, and positive Christian literature, both for the building up of the Christian community and for the winning of the non-Christian people of Ceylon, who are becoming every year more eager for something worth reading, and therefore more accessible to the spirit of Christ.

## ILLUSTRATIVE READINGS

### I. A Great Reformer.

Parākrama Bāhu I. (From the *Mahāvamsa*.)

Afterwards this chief of men erected in the middle of the city a square hall facing the four quarters, with divers rooms of great size, and established a charity with all the things that were needful thereunto, so that many hundreds of pious monks might be fed there daily; and this ruler of men, who was well pleased with them, failed not yearly to give unto them garments and robes according to their standing in the Order. Then in the four quarters of the city he built four Alms-halls, duly defined and separated from each other, and furnished with many vessels made of metal, and pillows and cushions, and mats, coverlets, and beds; and for the use of those halls he gave thousands of cows that yielded good milk. Then he planted gardens near them of exceeding beauty, delightful like those of heaven, with fountains of pure water, and ornamented with rows of trees bearing divers flowers and fruit. He built also many storehouses near them, filled with much grain, and supplied with candied sugar, treacle, honey, and all things of that kind; and this wise and firm and spirited

king stinted not, but, with a heart full of joy, caused a great distribution of alms to be made daily to many thousands of pious and devout monks who came from the four quarters of the land, and to Brahmans, and to begging minstrels, and to very many other poor beggars. And this ruler of men built further a large hall that could contain many hundreds of sick persons, and provided it also with all things that were needful. To every sick person he allowed a male and a female servant, that they might minister to him by day and by night, and furnish him with the physic that was necessary, and with divers kinds of food. And many store-houses also did he build therein, filled with grain and other things, and with all things that were needful for medicine. And he also made provision for the maintenance of wise and learned physicians who were versed in all knowledge and skilled in searching out the nature of diseases. And he took care to discern the different wants of the sick, and caused the physicians to minister to them, as seemed necessary, both by day and night. And it was his custom, on the four Sabbaths (Upasatha days) of every month, to cast off his king's robes, and, after that he had solemnly undertaken to observe the precepts, to purify himself and put on a clean garment, and visit that hall together with his ministers. And being endued with a heart full of kindness, he would look at the sick with an eye of pity, and being eminent in wisdom and skilled in the art of healing, he would call before him the physicians that were employed there and inquire fully of the manner of their treatment. And if so be that it happened that the treatment that they had pursued was wrong, the king, who was the best of teachers, would point out wherein they had erred, and, giving reason therefor, would make clear to them the course that they should have pursued according to science; also to some sick persons he would give physic with his own hands.

Likewise also he would inquire of the health of all those that were sick, and unto such as were cured of their diseases he would order raiment to be given. And as he desired greatly to gain merit, he would partake of merit at the hands of physicians, and impart his own merit to them, and then return to his own palace. In this manner, indeed, did this merciful king, free from disease himself, cure the sick of their divers diseases from year to year.

But there yet remaineth another marvel to relate, the like of which had neither been seen nor heard of before. A certain raven that was afflicted with a canker of his face and was in great pain, entered the hospital of the king, whose store of great goodness was distributed to all alike. And the raven, as if he had been bound by the spell of the king's great love for suffering creatures, quitted not the hospital, but remained there as if his wings were broken, cawing very piteously. Thereupon the physicians, after they had found out what his true disease was, took him in by the king's command and treated him; and after he was healed of his disease the king caused him to be carried on the back of an elephant round the whole city, and then set him free. Verily, kindness such as this, even when shown unto beasts, is exceeding great. Who hath seen such a thing, or where or when hath it been heard before?

Thereafter the king Parākrama Bāhu, who had gained the love of all good men, began with great vigour to enlarge and adorn the famous city of Pulatthi, which (had then been brought low and) was a city but in name, and could not show forth the exceeding greatness and majesty of the king. And from that time forth the protector of the land began to surround the city with fortifications; and outside the belt of the city-wall of former kings he caused a great chain of ramparts to be built, exceeding high, and greatly embellished it with plaster work, so that it was as white as



THE SHWE-DAGON PAGODA, RANGOON

a cloud in autumn. Thence he built three lesser walls, one behind another, and caused divers streets to be formed around them. Likewise, also, he surrounded his own palace and the chambers of the women of his household with a circle of lesser walls.

Then the greatest of all kings built a palace of great splendour called Vejayaṇṭa, so that none could be compared unto it, like unto one of the creations of Viṣṣakamma that have not been surpassed. It had seven stories, and contained one thousand chambers supported by many hundreds of beautiful pillars. It was surmounted with hundreds of pinnacles like the top of Kelasa, and adorned with networks of divers leaves and flowers. Its gates and doors and windows were made of gold, and its walls and staircases were so ordered that they gave pleasure in all the seasons. It was also always well supplied with thousands of beds of divers kinds, made of gold and ivory and other substances and with carpets of great value. And the splendour thereof was increased by the addition of a bedchamber for the king, which sent forth at all times a perfume of flowers and incense, and which was made beautiful with rows of large lamps of gold, and made exceedingly lovely by reason of the garlands of pearls of great size which were hung at the four corners thereof—pearls white like the rays of the moon, and which, as they waved to and fro, seemed to smile with scorn at the beautiful ripples of the river of heaven. And the network of tinkling bells of gold that hung here and there in the palace and sent forth sounds like unto those of the five instruments of music, seemed to proclaim the unlimited glory of the merits of the king.

## II. A Mediaeval Picture of Church and State.

(From the *Mahāvamsa*.)

King Parākrama Bāhu speaks :

‘In times past this people was much oppressed by Kings, who placed grievous burdens upon them, so that great troubles arose ; and the Kings were led astray by lust and hate, by fear and ignorance, caring not for the interests of the Sangha and the Realm. . . . And the religion of the Perfect Buddha has for long been shaken to its foundations by innumerable heresies, and rent by the disputes of its Three Factions, and its monks are shameless, loving only to fill their bellies, . . . and to support their wives and children. So it has come to pass that the Law of the Buddha has decayed before the elapse of the five thousand years, to which he foretold that it should endure.’

### Some significant Dates.

250 B. C.	<i>Mahinda takes Buddhism to Ceylon.</i>
300-450 A. D.	<i>The Dipawamsa compiled.</i>
400-500 A. D.	<i>The Mahāvamsa completed.</i>
454 A. D.	<i>Buddhagosa's Commentaries.</i>
	<i>Sacred texts transcribed.</i>
c. 640	<i>Huan Sang's visit.</i>
c. 1200	<i>Parākrama Bāhu builds Polonnaruwa.</i>

# CHAPTER VI

## BUDDHISM IN THE SOUTH

### B. IN BURMA.

*'Youth for pleasure, middle-age for business, old age for religion.'*—  
Burmese proverb.

ALMOST all that we have said of Ceylon Buddhism is true also of that of Burma ; but inasmuch as no boy is regarded as human till he has donned the yellow robe, and as elementary education is still very largely in the hands of the Bhikkus or Hpongyis, Buddhism has an even stronger hold on the people than it has in Ceylon, and has entered more deeply into their national life. Burma is more truly Buddhist than any other land. In Mandalay alone there are nearly 1,000 pagodas, and until lately there were nearly 10,000 Hpongyis ; and indeed these yellow-robed mendicants and these beautiful pagodas are the main features of a Burmese landscape. Where we say 'countless as the stars', the Burmese say 'countless as the pagodas of Pagān'.

The census report of 1891 showed that there was an average of two monasteries for every village in Burma, and over 75,000 Hpongyis in the country.

'The pagoda is built, and the country is ruined,' says the layman with a smile.

For at least fifteen hundred years the religion of Gautama has held undisputed sway over the great bulk of the population. As to when it entered Burma accounts differ ; it is possible that it was first introduced by the missionaries of King Asoka, though the Burmese claim that Gautama himself paid them a visit. A third theory is that the great commentator Buddhaghosa in the fifth century A. D. came from Ceylon or South India, and set 'the Wheel of the Law' rolling in their land.

Burmese  
Buddhism  
resembles  
that of  
Ceylon.

But is more  
truly a  
national  
religion.

Its entry  
into Burma.



It has certainly run a victorious course, being adopted as the State religion at the time of its decline and fall in India, and being the means of uniting the nation ; and to-day to change his religion seems to a Burman like disloyalty to his country. ' Buddhism is Burma custom.'

The up-  
bringing of  
a Burmese  
boy.

The impression made upon a Burmese boy as he grows up is very strong. At the age of seven or eight he enters a monastery school, which is open to all free of charge, and here, sitting at the feet of the Hpongyi, he learns to read and write and to repeat certain Pāli passages, with their Burmese equivalent, by heart. One of these (the Buddhist Beatitudes) we have already studied, and another is given at the end of the chapter. Besides these he also learns of course the Three Refuges :

I take refuge in the Buddha,  
I take refuge in the Law,  
I take refuge in the Order,

and the Five Precepts.

But more important than the actual instruction imparted is the Buddhist atmosphere in which he grows up : he sees the greatest men in the land bowing down to his teachers and calling them ' lord ', and he looks forward to the day of his own ' initiation ', when he will become a human being ! Before that he is known as ' little animal '.

The  
initiation  
ceremony.

Though this is often enough a mere form, yet all go through it, and it is accompanied by a ceremony of as grand a nature as possible.

The boy is dressed like a prince in memory of Prince Siddhartha, and after receiving the homage of his relatives and friends, rides through the village streets mounted on a white horse in memory of Gautama's faithful Kanthaka.

Then there is a grand procession, with canopies and banners, until the boy dismounts and puts off his royal robes. He bathes and dons a simple white garment, and



WORSHIPPERS AT THE SHWE-DAGON PAGODA, RANGOON

then in a Pāli sentence, learned by heart beforehand, asks the head monk 'out of compassion and for the sake of the attainment of Nirvāṇa' to grant him the yellow robe. He is now clad in this, and his head is shaved ; and then the initiation ceremony is performed. Every boy must remain in the monastery at least twenty-four hours, and usually a stay of a week is expected of him. 'No father would allow his son to omit the ceremony, any more than Christian children are allowed to remain unbaptized.'

A day in the monastery is not without its charm. Here is a description of a typical day by one who has himself been a monk :

'The whole community is wakened up in the morning at the time, as they say, "when there is light enough to see the veins in the hand", that is, of course, just before broad daylight, and is always about half-past five, for there is very little variation in sunrise and sunset in Burma. A day in the monastery.

After washing, dressing, and other necessary things, the novices sweep the monastery and draw water for the day's use, while one of them holds a service for the boys in the hall, which usually contains a very large image of Buddha. There is no need to go into all the details of a service, but the last part is worth noticing ; that is, how the boys ask for the Threefold Refuge and the Five Precepts.

The boys say together : "I, Venerable Sir, the Threefold Refuge, together with the Five Precepts, ask from you, your assistance granting, the Precepts give to me.

*Novice.* That which I recite do thou repeat.

*Boys.* Yes, Venerable Sir.

*Novice.* Glory be to Him, the Exalted Lord, the Holy One, the Utterly Awakened.<sup>1</sup>

*Boys.* Repeat.

<sup>1</sup> This and what follows form the usual 'Prayer' uttered by the Burman as he kneels before a shrine.

*Novice.* To the Buddha as a guide I go.  
 To the Law as a guide I go.  
 To the Order as a guide I go.

*Boys.* Repeat.

*Novice.* For the second time to the Buddha as a Guide  
 I go, &c.

*Boys.* Repeat.

*Novice.* For the third time to the Buddha as a Guide  
 I go.

*Boys.* Repeat.

*Novice.* The Refuge-going is accomplished.

*Boys.* Yes, Venerable Sir.

Then the novice and boys repeat alternately :

(1) The Precept of abstaining from taking life I solemnly undertake.

(2) The Precept of abstaining from taking what is not given I solemnly undertake.

(3) The Precept of abstaining from impurity I solemnly undertake.

(4) The Precept of abstaining from false-speaking I solemnly undertake.

(5) The Precept of abstaining from strong drink, intoxicant wine and fermented liquor, I solemnly undertake.

Then the novice : The Threefold Refuge, together with the Five Precepts, carefully guarding, by earnestness mayest thou accomplish !

*Boys.* So be it, Venerable Sir."

After this they prepare to go for their morning round of begging, the monk and novices carrying their bowls, which are usually placed in a carrier swung round the neck. They arrange themselves in single file, the seniors of the order being at the head. In front of the file there is a boy who carries a kind of gong—triangular in shape—striking it at intervals as the procession passes along, so that by this

sound the laymen and women may know that the procession is drawing near their houses. At the end of the file follow the schoolboys in pairs, each pair carrying a tray to receive the different kinds of curry that may be offered, for the bowls are only used to receive rice and other dry offerings, but in Ceylon every kind of offering, whether it be dry or juicy, is poured into the same bowl. . . .

In a file they go through the streets with measured steps, looking neither to the right nor to the left, their eyes fixed on the ground six feet in front of them, making no halt, except when some one comes out of a house to offer. No word nor look rewards the most generous giver. No thanks are required, for it is the religious who confer the favour, and it is also written : "What is a real gift?—A gift for which no kind of return whatever is expected." The time for a round is about an hour or two hours.

Then they all return to the monastery and proceed to breakfast, after which they have a rest for an hour or so ; but the monk usually receives laymen who wish to discuss religious affairs with him. The novices are supposed to be in meditation and the boys go off to play.

Then a class is held, when the boys shout out their work at the top of their voices, for if they do not they are considered to be going to sleep or getting into some kind of mischief. It is the combination of so many voices that induces an author to say, "The noise of a monastery during the class suggests to the stranger that the place is in turbulent revolt, or that an ill-assorted county council is holding a meeting", but such noise disturbs no one at all in the country, except Europeans. This goes on till half-past eleven, when the monk and novices take their last meal for the day.

Whatever is left of the offerings received in the early morning is never kept after this meal, but thrown away at the back of the monastery ground, for birds and dogs.

The latter are very numerous indeed ; they go about in flocks, belonging to nobody at all, and are most annoying to the people, for they usually fight with one another in the early morning about three or four o'clock.

Another class is held about two o'clock till four, the boys shouting out in the same way ; after which they return home for their evening meal. The novices either go to bathe or stroll to pagodas or some other religious buildings to meditate ; at least, that is what they are *supposed* to do ! But, as I have already stated, the boys enter Holy Orders at an earlier age than formerly. One can hardly imagine a boy of twelve or thirteen years sitting by the pagodas in deep meditation. As far as I can remember, when I was a novice at the age of eleven I did nothing of the kind. The monk or novices when having a bath, no matter however private the bath may be, must never take off all their robes ; one piece at least must remain. For if one has thrown off all his robes he cannot wear them again without another ordination ceremony. While the novices and boys are thus away the monk again receives laymen. At sunset all the novices must be back in the monastery ground, and some of the boys come back early, some late ; but every one must be in the monastery by about eight o'clock, when there is another service held for the boys, the formula being the same as the one in the morning, and thus the day ends.<sup>1</sup>

A day, as has been said, 'full of great possibilities for all', and in some at any rate of the boys is implanted a desire to 'leave the world' and become Hpongyis.

It is evident then that a Burmese boy spends part at any rate of his life in an atmosphere that is strongly Buddhist, and has little excuse for not learning the essentials of his religion. For the girls no systematic training is provided ; they are regarded in theory as much inferior, though in

<sup>1</sup> From an article in *The Buddhist Review*, vol. v, No. 4.

practice : they are singularly free and happy, and are as staunch supporters of their religion as the men. of Burmese women.

Yet they know less about it. A Burmese friend who was converted from Buddhism to Christianity tells me that a woman once questioned him as to what it was in Buddhism that he did not like. He replied that there were only a few points with which he disagreed. On being pressed he began to enumerate them: 'First,' he said, 'I dislike all this bowing to images; second, I dislike the reverence paid to the Hpongyis . . .' 'Stop, stop,' she cried, 'you are destroying the whole of Buddhism.'

The Buddhism of the women, and indeed of many of the men, may be said to consist very largely in these two practices and in the Doctrine of Merit—which, as in Ceylon so in Burma, has become an obsession.

But there is an integral part of the religion of the Burmese of which such a statement takes no account. When Buddhism entered Burma it met with degraded animistic beliefs, which very rapidly became incorporated with it. With them it made an unholy alliance. Buddhism  
blent  
with  
animism.

Gautama Buddha had taught that a good man becomes a deva, or godling, and a bad man a yakkha, or demon, and the peoples of Burma were animist before Buddhism arrived. Burmese 'Buddhism' to-day is very largely the cult of these Nats: the two religions are inseparably intertwined.<sup>1</sup>

A Burmese villager will hardly cut down a tree or dig the earth without first propitiating the Nat who controls it, and the Nats are more real forces in the lives of the people than the Buddhas. A Burman with childish inconsistency will sacrifice animals to the Nats and drink spirits in their honour—committing the two worst sins in the Buddhist decalogue.

<sup>1</sup> This is exposed in the Burmese saying, 'At the front door a pagoda, at the back door King Magari' (a Nat).

In animism certain forces of nature were personified and the spirits of the departed were held to play a large part in the drama of human life ; they are still propitiated or fed, and the Nats are representatives of both these classes of being. Every house has its Nat, whom it is usual to propitiate with offerings and wild dances, and there is a king of all the Nats, the *Thagya Min*, whose power is owned by layman and monk alike. Next to him in importance is a hierarchy of thirty-seven chief Nats.

It is usually stated that this Nat-worship is the real religion of the Burmese, and that Buddhism is only a thin veneer overlying it ; but this is a very inaccurate statement, for Buddhism is very intimately interwoven with it, and the doctrines of Karma and Transmigration, as in Ceylon, are in the very bones and blood of the people.

Yet it remains true, as a Buddhist says, 'that pure Buddhism is only to be found among the well educated ; for Buddhism is far too difficult to be understood by uneducated people, because they have to reason out why they should believe this or that, and they do not know enough to do it. Reasoning is what Buddhism is mainly based on.' It is indeed the religion of analysis and 'enlightenment'. Buddhism, however, is so closely interwoven with the national life that no Burman, except the educated few, really reasons about it all. It is matter of custom and tradition, it is picturesque and sociable, and in fact all the events of his daily life seem to be blent with it. 'The average Burman is far too much a child of nature to understand or appreciate Buddhist metaphysics : what he can understand is the periodic festivals which Buddhism offers him.'

They are very gay and artistic and sociable people ; and they greatly enjoy these festivals—'from festive marriages to no less festive funerals'.

At these festivals, which are a singularly attractive blending



of grave and gay, the latter predominating, the old people take the ten vows and the young throw themselves heart and soul into the junketing they so much love. At the chief of these, which falls about the middle of April, the Buddha image, the Nats, and people of the opposite sex are 'watered', and at another the whole land is ablaze with lights; were it not for the coarse jokes of the 'pwe' one could wish to see nothing more charming or spontaneous. The people of Burma certainly make up for the lack of social worship in Buddhism by these festivals, which are closely connected with the old Nat-worship of pre-Buddhist days; and they do not pause to reflect that these are not really Buddhism at all.

As a missionary of great insight and of unfailing sympathy with the Burmese has written:

'Any one who has seen the golden pagoda at Rangoon shimmering in the moonlight will no longer wonder that Buddhism appeals to the people. The spectacle is one of entrancing beauty. Moonlight in Burma is almost intoxicating to the senses.

'It is instructive to watch the movements of the people on these festive occasions. They take their handful of flowers, or some other offering, and kneeling down before one of the numerous shrines they repeat the creed of Buddhism—"*Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta*" (all is impermanent, all is suffering, all is unreal). Then, having completed the serious side of the business, they proceed to belie their depressing doctrines by embarking upon a night of merry-making. They join one of the crowds gathered round the various theatrical troupes which have been hired by well-to-do people to give free performances. Though these performances often take place either on the pagoda platform or in the monastic compound, this does not prevent the frequent introduction of lewd jokes into the dialogue; and the

uproarious laughter of the spectators suggests that though in theory they may believe that "all is sorrow" they manage to extract a great deal of pleasure out of their existence. To the ordinary Burman the theatrical performance on these occasions is as much an integral part of his religion as the prayers and offerings. He cannot dissociate the two and he cannot understand why any Burman should wish to give up either. The Burmese Christians who avoid these festivals and neglect to illuminate their houses on these occasions are regarded as unsociable, and they are subjected to vexatious annoyances on the same ground as the early Christians were persecuted as being "haters of the human race".

'However pessimistic Buddhism may be in theory, in actual practice it is so bound up with the national festivities of Burma as to be almost identified with them. From their natural love of gaiety the Burmese people have been described as the "Irish of the East". It is natural therefore that they should consider that Buddhism is exactly suited to their national temperament, and display very little inclination to change it for any other form of religion.'

A 'Hpon-gyi Byan' (cremation of a monk).

Another very festive occasion is when a monk dies or 'returns', as they say: meaning that he goes back to a life of great glory and happiness. Why should any one mourn? Funds are collected and a fine funeral pyre is erected, with a gorgeous building covering it in. Surrounding it are posts with flags and streamers of different colours, and at night the whole place is brilliantly illuminated, and there are 'pwes' (pantomimes) and much bean-feasting.

Meantime the body lies in state, embalmed in honey and covered in gold-leaf, waiting to be burnt; and on the day of cremation it is put on to a cart and made the centre of a tug-of-war, many hundreds joining in, and many thousands

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. W. C. B. Purser in *The International Review of Missions*.



BURMESE CHRISTIAN HERMIT

cheering wildly: for the side which wins gains the chief 'Merit' of the funeral expenditure!

A childlike people, singularly attractive, yet in desperate need of Christ. If they are so happy now, what may they not teach us of Christian joy when the great fact of the Resurrection comes home to them? Of the need of a joyous Christianity amongst them much might be said. 'The most Christ-like thing amongst the Burmese is their sunny cheeriness.'

Their Buddhist beliefs are undergoing a marked change in the direction of Theism: great numbers of them really believe in God and the Soul, and almost all are tending to think of Heaven in its Christian sense rather than of Nirvāna as the goal; and many are disgusted with the mathematical doctrines of Merit preached by the Hpongyis, and with the shortcomings of the Hpongyis themselves.

Everywhere, too, there is a belief that the Merit of the Buddha, merit achieved by hundreds of sacrificial lives, of which that of Prince Wessantara is the most famous, can be shared by his people, and here, as in Ceylon, there is a longing for certainty of such saving grace. Here, then, is an open door for the Gospel. And inasmuch as they are a highly literate race, there is a wonderful chance for Christian writers of culture and enthusiasm who will prepare a sound Christian literature, and help the Burmese Christians to write their own apologetic. Works of fiction saturated with the Christian spirit, health pamphlets, commentaries, and a variety of other books are urgently needed.

The schools and colleges also need able and keen missionary educationalists; and almost everywhere there is room for evangelists and medical missionaries.

The social service of the Church needs to be multiplied in every direction, and a united Christian College could do much.

Theistic  
and  
Christian  
tendencies  
in Burmese  
Buddhism.

An open  
door for  
Chris-  
tianity.

Need of  
Christian  
writers,

of educa-  
tionalists,  
and  
doctors.

Burma  
needs  
Christ.

The students of Burma, cheery, capable, athletic men, need Christ desperately—whether they know it or not—and they call upon us to help them to conquer the fierce temptations that beset them on every side, and to give them an anchor for their souls, and a Friendship with the Holiest.

It is a Scotsman who more than any one else is reviving Buddhism amongst educated Burmans; but the new enthusiasm for Buddhism does not help them to overcome. Are there not other Britishers eager to show them a more excellent way?

The need is the more urgent because, to quote a Government Blue book of 1912, 'with the decay of ancient beliefs the Buddhist religion is losing its moral sanction as an inspiring force in the lives of its adherents, and drunkenness, gambling, drug-taking, and vicious habits, increasing as they all are, tend to produce a weakening of self-control and a loss of self-respect which in favouring circumstances easily create the criminal'.<sup>1</sup>

The  
Buddhist  
revival.

Meantime a Buddhist revival is at work fostered by certain Neo-Buddhists, who claim that Buddhism, shorn of its un-Buddhistic elements such as prayer and theistic beliefs, can regenerate Burma. It manifests itself amongst the villagers in a great enthusiasm for building pagodas and monasteries.

Of these activities the educated Young Burman party is impatient, and if the Church of Christ can show a united front and can take the lead in guiding this new enthusiasm into sane channels of social service and philanthropy, it will establish its claim to be the fulfilment of the Law of Gautama, and to bring that abundant life which it is its mission to give to the nation as to the individual.

There are large areas with about 1,000,000 inhabitants

<sup>1</sup> From the Blue book on the Administration of Criminal Justice, 1912.

almost entirely without missionaries in them, and these offer splendid pioneer work to men of consecration and power. Then there are great tracts of very inadequately occupied territory, with about 7,000,000 inhabitants. In these districts the mission societies have wisely concentrated their forces at the great urban centres; but there is desperate need for more workers at these centres and for medical and other 'jungle-missionaries'. The men at the centres are very largely engaged in administrative or educational work, and direct evangelization is perforce neglected, while the social work of the Church goes by the board.

Here, then, is a clear call to Great Britain to send of her best for this work in a country of great fascination and potentialities, which occupies a strategic position at the meeting-place of China and the Far East with India. At present Burma is a reproach to the Church of Christ in Great Britain. For the greater part of the missionary work of Burma is being done by devoted men and women of the Baptist Church in America; and there are at present only about 17,000 Burman Christians in the whole country, out of a population of ten to eleven millions.

Yet Christianity is making great strides amongst the Karens and other animistic peoples,<sup>1</sup> and is rescuing them from a very degraded to a very enlightened position; and there is a splendid work waiting to be done amongst them also, the work of building up the Body of Christ, and helping these very attractive peoples to bring their peculiar gifts into His Church.

Can a man spend his life more usefully or in a more fascinating calling than in helping to build a nation and a Church? He could find nowhere a more attractive and hopeful sphere of work.

<sup>1</sup> Nearly 20,000 of these are already Christian.

## ILLUSTRATIVE READING

(From *The Heart of Buddhism.*)

**The Story of Prince Wessantara.**

The story of Wessantara, or, as the Burmese call him, Wethandaya, is the most popular story in Burma and Siam.

Wessantara is a mythical prince, the last incarnation of the Bodhisat before he was reborn as Siddartha and became the Buddha.

Prince Wessantara was the son of Visvamitta, and is described as ideally handsome according to Indian standards: 'his complexion golden, his brow like a dome, his arms long, his eyebrows meeting, and his nose aquiline.' He was as good as he was beautiful, and so liberal in giving that his father in a rage banished him from his kingdom.

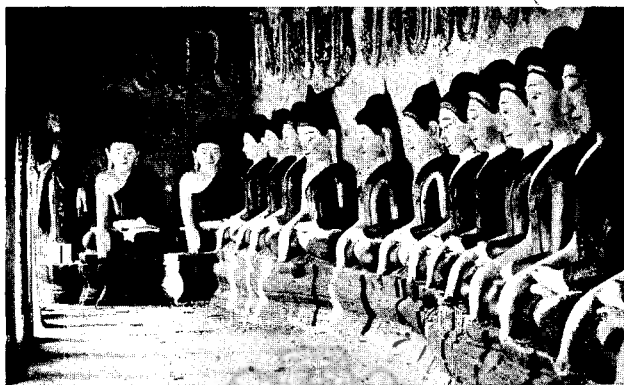
The story of his wonderful self-effacement is very popular in Buddhist lands, forming the subject of frescoes on the temple walls, and the subject of never-ending comment.

The following is a paraphrase which keeps close to the original, but is condensed for the sake of brevity:

'Being banished by his father, Wessantara the Bodhisat went to his wife Maddi and told her that he had vowed to go out into the jungle and lead the solitary life of contemplation. 'I too will come with my lord,' said the faithful wife: 'how can I live parted from thee for a moment? As the moonless sky, as the waterless earth, so is a wife without her husband.'

So they went out together into the jungle.

After some days a Brahman approached and asked that the prince should give him his splendid chariot; and when the Princess Maddi grew angry at his request the prince rebuked her, saying, 'O Maddi, if there were none to make requests there would be no giving; whence then should we



BURMESE BUDDHAS



A NAT SHRINE AND OFFERINGS



mortals gain the true insight that comes only to the liberal?' And with great joy he gave both chariot and horses to the Brahman, exclaiming, 'O Brahman, through this gift freely given may I be empowered to guide the chariot of the Righteous Law!'

Then taking up their children Jaliya and Krishnayina upon their shoulders, they passed on their way.

One day, whilst the Princess was out gathering roots and wild fruits for their evening meal, a hunchbacked Brahman drew near and addressed the Prince, 'O Prince of the Kshatriya stock, all hail! No servant have I, and alone I wander through the jungle. Give me, I pray thee, thy children.' And when Wessantara hesitated, he reminded him of his name for liberality and adjured him to live worthy of it. Wessantara thereupon laying aside the yearning of his heart, reasoned with himself, 'If now I give the children to the Brahman, then will Maddi and I feel the cruel pain of bereavement; but if I give them not I shall prove faithless to my vow, and the Brahman will be disappointed of his hope'. He reflected further that these sufferings were coming upon him that he might in due season become the Enlightened, and save from the ocean of ignorance those who are sinking in its bottomless depths.

So he gave the children to the Brahman. Whereupon the earth quaked six times; and the children fell at their father's feet crying, 'O father, let us but see our mother ere we leave you both for ever'. And the Prince, covering his face with his hand to hide his tears, said in a breaking voice, 'O my children, in my heart is no harshness, only boundless compassion. I give you away that I may attain perfect insight.'

And they, with hands placed palm to palm, laid their heads upon his feet and prayed for forgiveness of all their faults; and so went forth. And he, as they looked back

and ever turned to look one long last look, consoled them with compassionate words.

Then, desiring perfect insight, he entered alone into his hut of leaves.

The air straightway was filled with cries of legions of gods exclaiming, 'O, the great deed of sacrifice! wondrous is he whose mind is unshaken even at the loss of both his children!'

Then Maddi the mother drew near, and her heart was full of foreboding as she saw the little house they had built of mud, and all their playthings lying deserted: weeping she threw herself at her husband's feet, and asked him of them. And he made answer, 'Rejoice, my wife! A Brahman came and asked me for them, and I gave them to him.' As a stricken hart, she fell at his feet and lay as a fish that breathes out its life upon the shore, and as a cow robbed of her calf she mourned: 'As young tender lilies my children suffer: as young gazelles snared by the huntsman are they dwelling with strangers. They whom I nourished at these breasts are now in the hands of sinful men; hungry and thirsty they cry for me in despair. O miserable woman! what dreadful sin have I sinned that this suffering has overtaken me?'

And she called upon the trees that they had watered and upon their playmates the gazelles to witness the dreadful torments of her heart.

But the Bodhisat comforted her and exhorted her to be strong; and she came to herself at length and said: 'I will not be a hindrance to you, O my husband! If it please you, give me also as a gift.'

Then Sakra, the chief of gods, wondering at the fortitude of Wessantara, thought thus with himself, 'Surely this man, if he be left quite alone, may fail of his endurance', and taking the form of a Brahman he came to the Bodhisat and

addressed him thus : ' Fair is the Princess ; blameless wife and peerless among women. Give her to me as my slave.' But Maddi reviled him, ' O man of lust, long not for her who delights only in the law of righteousness'.

Then the Bodhisat, looking upon her with heart of compassion, spoke : ' O wife, I seek after the heights, and I must pass beyond anguish to calm. No lament or complaint must I utter. Do thou therefore go with the Brahman uncomplainingly, and I will live alone in the jungle.'

So saying, he exulted and cried, ' Best of my gifts is this ! Take, O Brahman, my dear, dear wife ; loving and submissive is she in all things.'

Then the earth shook to its foundations, as a boat on a stormy sea ; and Sakra, the chief of gods, revealed himself and promised to give the Princess whatever she should wish.

And she, motherlike, besought him that her children might find their way to their grandfather's court. He granted her request, and restored her to the Bodhisat, warning him never again to part with so devoted a wife.

सत्यमेव जयते

## CHAPTER VII

### BUDDHISM IN THE NORTH

*'An exceeding bitter cry for what Christianity has to offer.'*

NORTHWARDS and eastwards of Burma stretch countries which, like it, are inhabited by Mongolian peoples, and, like it, have been greatly influenced by Buddhism.

Yet, as we have seen, the Buddhism of these Northern lands is a very different thing from that of the South.

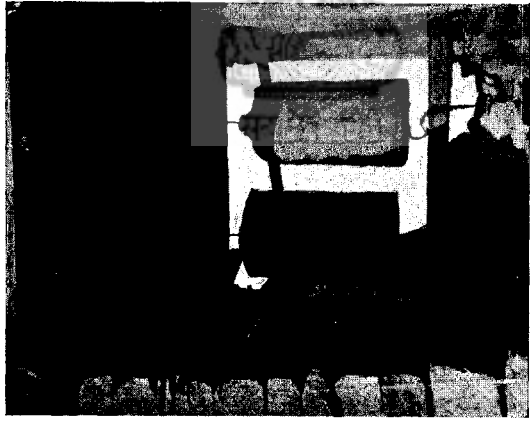
#### A. IN TIBET.

The mysterious closed land of Tibet is still inaccessible to the ambassadors of Christ, and still under the suzerainty, in name at least, of one who claims to be an incarnation of the Buddha.

The history of Tibet may be said to begin in the seventh century A. D., when its ruling chief married two wives—one from China and one from Nepal—both of whom were Buddhists. A hundred years later one of his successors sent to India for Buddhist Bhikkhus, who came bringing with them the very decadent Buddhism of the eighth century.

Buddhism  
and  
demonism.

As in Burma, so in Tibet the new religion made a sordid alliance with the demon-worship already in the field. But the demons of Tibet are of a more terrible genus than those of Burma, and human sacrifice for many centuries played a part in their worship. 'Similar to the contrast between the natural environment of the Irrawaddy and the snow-



PRAYER CYLINDERS IN TIBET



A DEVIL MASK OF  
TIBETAN BUDDHISM

capped Himālayas is the contrast between the Buddhism which governs the north and that which rules in Ceylon and Farther India. Here the sun pours down on rice-field and voluptuous forest or jungle thicket, palms and orchids; on naked or almost naked lithe brown human figures, childishly gay and joyous faces, decked with flowers. There rise wide, gloomy precipices, sinking into deep abysses; desolate plateaus, across which sweep raging storms; glaciers look down from the heights; the earth is rendered hard and unfruitful by rock; the faces of men are wild and forbidding—men who have to contend with the elements, broad, coarse figures, wrapped in skins and thick garments.’<sup>1</sup>

Probably the physical features of Tibet account very largely for its religion. For these gloomy mountain passes and dark abysses give colour to the belief in fierce implacable devils; and the lamas of Tibet have played unscrupulously upon the superstitious fears of the people.

It is difficult to over-estimate the power of these men, of whom Colonel Waddell says that it will be a blessed day <sup>Lamas.</sup> for Tibet when their rule comes to an end. When General Younghusband’s expedition reached the ‘Holy City’ of Lhasa, where the Dalai Lama or Pope of Tibetan Buddhism has his head-quarters, he found 10,000 lamas batten- ing upon the poor and ignorant people in that city alone, and strove to make honest citizens of them by forcing them to fetch and carry for his troops.

The demon-masks shown in our illustration are samples <sup>Their</sup> of the methods they employ to keep the people in subjec- <sup>methods.</sup> tion; they used them also to try and frighten our troops; and human skulls turned into drums and aprons made of human bones are also part of their stock-in-trade.

Tibetan Buddhism is largely a religion of fear—fear of

<sup>1</sup> From *Buddhism as a Religion*, by H. Hackmann, to whom this chapter is greatly indebted.

the lamas, fear of the demons, fear of the many gods who crowd the lamaistic pantheon.

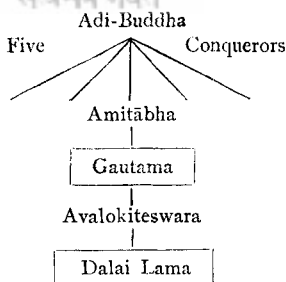
The  
Tibetan .  
Pantheon.

Let us try to reduce this strange medley to some sort of order. First, there is the whole series of Buddhas, of whom five—Gautama, his three predecessors, and his successor Maitreyya—are of special importance.

For they are believed to be emanations of heavenly beings; thus the historical Gautama is merely the incarnation of the great *Amitābha* (Boundless Light); and behind all the five heavenly Buddhas again is one Supreme Buddha—Origin and Source of all—*Ādi-Buddha*.

But the god-making fancy of Northern Buddhism did not stop here. Besides Buddhas (of whom these Five Conquerors are only the chief), there are also Bodhisattvas corresponding to them. Thus there is a Bodhisattva corresponding to Gautama, Avalokiteswara, and it is he who is incarnate in the Dalai Lama. He is believed in as a saviour who bears men along by his irresistible grace, as a cat carries her kittens in her mouth!

We may put some of this elaborate myth-making in diagrammatic form, showing the Gautama series of incarnations:



Thus two of the series, Gautama and the Dalai Lama, are historical figures, and the rest myths. Yet this is not quite

a fair statement ; for the whole attempt is really eloquent of the need of the human heart for a supreme God, and of the need of a historic vindication of that God.

Moreover, Tibetan Buddhism, in making gods of Endless Life, Endless Light, of Power and Wisdom and Love, is one more proof that the heart of man needs God and that in Jesus Christ it can find satisfaction and strength. Is it not a further proof that human nature is the same all over the world ?

Tibetan Buddhism has also female deities, the Tāras, one Tāra being worshipped as the consort of Avalokiteswara, and having been incarnate in the two wives of the first Buddhist King of Tibet.

Another Tāra is a monstrous figure with three faces and eight arms—one of the faces being that of a sow ; and Mongolians believe that still another of the Tāras becomes incarnate as the Czar of Russia.

Next to these beings come a kind of 'anti-demons', tutelary gods who are represented as very hideous and therefore very alarming to the demons over whom they hold sway ; and each has a consort as ugly as himself and as bloodthirsty.

Four Kings rule the four quarters of the Universe, and these also must be propitiated ; they play a part also in Southern Buddhism, one being the Prince of demon-armies.

Then there is the Lord of Hell, Yama, who judges the dead and rules the eight hot and the eight cold hells ; his consort is Lhamo, the tutelary deity of Lhasa ; and with them are countless armies of demons and ghouls.

Last, there are the saints of Buddhism. Beside the Buddha image in the temples stand figures of Sāriputta and Moggallāna, his chief disciples, and sometimes the gentle Ānanda is also there.

Such is the pantheon of Buddhism in the North, and in



other striking ways it differs from the more sober Buddhism of the South.

Other points in which Tibetan Buddhism differs from that in the South. Prayer-flags and wheels.

A common feature of the landscape are poles with fluttering flags suspended from them, and on these are the prayers and ejaculations of the faithful.

'*Om Mani Padme Hum*' ('Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus') is the commonest form of these prayers, and will be familiar to readers of *Kim*, though even the lamas have forgotten its meaning. It is found printed a thousand times over in great cylindrical prayer-drums which are worked sometimes by machinery, sometimes by hand, and which by a single revolution are believed to win for the owner entrance into a Heaven, or at worst escape from a Hell.

Thus in Tibet one may set one's prayer-wheel revolving and then go comfortably to sleep! For the Tibetan conception of prayer is purely mechanical, and the lamas are themselves always turning small hand prayer-wheels or telling the 108 beads of a rosary. Here the doctrine of Merit may be said to touch bottom!<sup>1</sup>

Hermits.

In addition to the lamas, who are of two sects—the Yellow-cap or ascetic sect, to whom Kim's lama belonged, and the Red-cap lamas, who may marry—Tibetan Buddhism has a large number of hermits, some of whom endure terrible privations, dwelling in complete solitude in holes in the ground and starving themselves almost to death. Surely where there is such earnestness and such belief in prayer, however mistaken the forms it takes, there is promise of a rich harvest for the Church of Christ, though missions can at present only work upon the borders of Tibet.

As my friend the late Mr. Sidney Long has expressed it, 'The incessant pursuit of superstition and the lavish payment of money to the lamas in their priestly capacity,

<sup>1</sup> 'Our country does not suffer from lack of prayers,' said the Mahārāja of Sikkim to me: yet true prayer is hardly to be found.



TIBETAN LAMAS

show the deep longing of the people for something, though they know not what. The terrible ascetic tortures that both laity and priesthood in some cases undergo, far exceeding anything that many of us who are Christians would dream of, are a stretching forth to the utmost of "faith's lame hands", and evidence of earnest seeking in some poor blind fashion, which He surely notes who said, "Seek, and ye shall find".'

A touching little illustration of faith and hope, even in these dark lands, is given in the fact that in the miniature clay images of Buddha and Buddhist saints, which are thrown by thousands upon graves and into empty caves as a meritorious act, is a little seed of corn, buried and hidden in the clay, an emblem of the hope that in some way, far off, life may yet spring out of death.

Another touching custom is found amongst the women. They wear great conch-shells upon wrist or neck, believing that here are lamps which will light them through 'the valley of the shadow', very much as in Burma the dead are buried with a coin between their teeth, presumably to pay the ferryman who shall carry them across 'the dark river' beyond the grave.

Here are indications once more that the human heart with its passionate longing for a resurrection-life finds Nirvāna an empty dream and the doctrine of transmigration intolerable.

Yet the lamas are strongly convinced of its truth, and their whole system is built upon it. The Dalai Lama, for instance, is chosen from all the children born nine months after his predecessor died, for then the Bodhisattva Avalokiteswara, being set free from his former body, is believed to become incarnate in a new one.

The method of selection is very interesting.

All the stolid little oblique-eyed babies are placed in

a row, and the possessions of the dead lama are placed before them, with imitations mixed with them ; clearly the Bodhisattva will recognize his favourite possessions ! If the child seizes the genuine articles, this is proof positive that he is the new incarnation. Subject to the approval of Chinese officials, the child is duly appointed to his high office, and enters upon a career which usually terminates in a violent death ; for China does not love the Papacy !

Next in dignity to the Dalai Lama comes the Grand Lama of Tashi Lumpo, and then a number of other Grand Lamas and an Abbess—all of them regarded as reincarnations of Bodhisattvas. Below these again are a whole hierarchy of lesser lamas, and their number is legion. Tibet boasts over 3,000 monasteries.

To what do the lamas owe their extraordinary power ? Partly to the teachings of Buddhism, which inevitably foster priestcraft and set the celibate on a pedestal by making him the chief means of acquiring merit ; partly to the belief in the reincarnation of Bodhisattvas as lamas ; but chiefly to the superstitious fears of the people and the claims of the lamas themselves to stand between the gods and the people on the one hand, and the devils and the people on the other.

**Priestcraft.** Priestcraft is always a bar to progress, and never has it proved a more terrible drag on a nation than in Tibet. 'They have barred the way to every form of commerce. They are doctors, chemists, painters, tradesmen, money-lenders, and beggars who take no refusal, besides being priests, prophets, and wizards. What they may not themselves undertake, such as the superintendence of their large properties and all sorts of handicrafts, they compel laymen to do for them, and these become little else than serfs to them. In every respect they are on an elevated and more sheltered plane than others. Whoever steals anything from

a lama, or murders one, incurs a penalty five or tenfold greater than is exacted in other cases. Nevertheless the people not only endure this extraordinary and burdensome yoke, but it gains ever new ascendancy from them, and has its roots in them, in the obscure depth of the soul of the individual, which no scientific investigation will ever fully explain.'

Such is the Buddhism of Tibet: a strange medley of magic and mystery-mongering with the philosophical and ethical teachings of Gautama. And when we recollect that a 'wheel of life', such as that reproduced in our frontispiece, which once hung in the Dalai Lama's palace in Lhasa, is found in almost every temple in Tibet, we shall realize that with all its perversions the religion of Tibet is undoubtedly Buddhism.

How ugly and vile some of these perversions are only those who have been in Tibet can imagine: how dreadful is the tyranny of the lamas only a Tibetan can say!

How great a day it will be in the history of Tibet when the Light of the World dispels the darkness—this any sensible man can understand. And the Gospel of the Love of a Father-God is good tidings indeed to these demon-haunted souls.

## B. IN CHINA.

There is a legend that Buddhism entered China in the second century B. C., but it made its first serious attempt to convert China about the middle of the first century A. D., when the Emperor Ming Ti, in obedience to a vision in which a great golden image appeared to him, sent emissaries to bring teachers of the Buddhist religion into his Empire.

But Buddhism, though invited and fostered by the Emperor, had a more formidable task in China than else-

where ; and it was not till 300 years had elapsed that the Chinese were allowed to become monks.

Finds  
Taoism  
and Con-  
fucianism  
already in  
the field.

For China already had highly developed religions of her own, which still persist side by side with Buddhism and are to a very considerable extent fused with it. These are Taoism and the state religion, the first associated with the teacher Laotzē and the second with his younger contemporary Confucius.

Taoism is sufficiently akin to Buddhism to make terms with it on its magic or supernatural side, and Confucianism has points of contact with it on its ethical side ; but there has always been competition and rivalry, and the Chinese felt from the first that their own religions were as good as that imported from India, and in some points better than it.

Yet it  
becomes  
strongly  
established  
in the  
fourth cen-  
tury A. D.  
Pilgrim-  
ages to  
India.

Yet about the third century A. D., in the reign of Wu-ti, the new religion began to exert a strong influence, and in the fourth century, in the reign of the Hun Emperor She-hu, began the ordination of Chinese monks, and with it the naturalization of the imported religion.

During this period Chinese pilgrims began to visit India, and to study Buddhism in the land of its birth. The most famous of these pilgrims are Fa Hsian of the fifth century, Huan Sang of the sixth, and I Tsing of the seventh, who have left us valuable accounts of their impressions of Indian Buddhism.

They are written entirely from the Mahāyāna standpoint, and it is quite clear that Chinese Buddhism from the start belonged to this school.

Buddhism  
meets  
Chris-  
tianity.

Very early in its history, about A. D. 636, Chinese Buddhism must have come into contact with Christianity, for certain heretical Christians, the Nestorians, established strong missions in China, and churches or 'temples of happiness' were built by some of the emperors, one of whom even



MAKING A BUDDHA IMAGE



KWANYIN  
Goddess of Mercy

kept the Christmas festival ; and even as late as the thirteenth century the traveller Marco Polo found Chinese Christianity in a fairly thriving state. But by the fourteenth century the Nestorians had submitted to Rome, and those in China came under the direction of the Franciscan Mission, which had arrived in 1293.

Another Christian mission sent out by the great Dominican order, then in its prime, got a firm hold in the Emperor's Court during the fourteenth century, and it seems clear that Chinese and Japanese Buddhism have been to some extent influenced by Christianity.

It is sometimes said that John Chinaman will call himself in one breath a Confucianist, a Taoist, a Buddhist, and a Christian, and there is undoubted truth in this. For the Chinese are eclectics, and get something out of each religion ; yet the religions are really incompatible. Buddhism and Confucianism are agnostic ; Christianity is primarily the good news of God's love ; Taoism is a system of astrology and science, ' falsely so called ', which Christianity repudiates, and there can be no question of compromise.

Yet on certain moral duties, especially that of filial piety, all are one, and the Christian Chinaman is right in not utterly repudiating these good lessons which the old religions of the past have taught him (especially Confucianism, to which he owes a sensitive moral consciousness), whilst he recognizes that China owes her great awakening and her new life to Christ. But the Buddhism of China is a strange medley of good and evil, and the evil predominates. Let us see wherein it differs from that of Tibet.

In the first place there are fewer ' gods ', though these belong to the same four great classes—Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Saints, and tutelary deities.

Secondly, the coming Buddha, Metteyya, occupies a quite subordinate place as a tutelary god ; a fat jolly figure holding

The China-  
man an  
eclectic.

Points in  
which  
Chinese  
Buddhism  
differs from  
that of  
Tibet.



a bag containing good fortune, and not to be taken too seriously.

Thirdly, the Bhikkhus are a despised class, mostly corrupt, with little of the power of the lamas, and there is no hierarchy.

Monasticism and asceticism.

The monks in China are ignorant and lazy, and their moral standard is said to be much lower than that of the laity. Yet they are in deadly earnest if we may judge by their asceticism. Though quite against the teaching of the Buddha, who called it an abomination, asceticism of a revolting type is practised as part of the ordination ceremony: lumps of charcoal are glued to the shaven head of the candidate and then ignited, whilst the sufferer with uplifted hands calls aloud upon Amitābha (*Omīto Fō*). Some go so far as to burn off a finger, and others have even been known to allow themselves to be burnt alive on some funeral pyre. All this is strongly opposed to Chinese ideals of life, for monasticism tends to weaken family ties, and the family is the basis of Chinese civilization. Moreover, amongst an industrious people such as the Chinese the monastic life is felt to be idle and unproductive, and a common taunt is that 'the monk is not so useful as the silkworm'.

He is despised, moreover, as being either illiterate or, if literate, not knowing anything outside the Buddhist books.

The services of the monks.

Yet the services of these monks play an important part in Chinese life, for it is they who advise the people as to which of the gods they shall propitiate, and it is they who recite the sacred texts. In times of sickness or peril the gods must be consulted or lots drawn, and these are in charge of the monks, who foster superstitious beliefs and teach the laity that the destiny of the soul, even after death, may be influenced by offerings in the temples.

But it may fairly be argued that the laity of China are not

Buddhists at all ;<sup>1</sup> they have to do only with the ceremonial aspects of Buddhism, and only in so far as Buddhism by its doctrine of transmigration fits in with ancestor-worship will the Chinese laity have anything to do with it. Their ancestral tablets are a main feature of the Buddhist temples, and ancestor-worship is probably the real religion of the people. The laity  
not  
Buddhists.

It is true that Buddhism has coloured their art, for many of their leading artists have been monks, and their literature is interwoven with the Buddhist legends. Moreover, the idea of Merit has got a firm hold here as in all lands whither Buddhism has come.

But Buddhism cannot be regarded as a great power in China, and it has certainly not laid China under so great a debt as Burma and Ceylon : rather is it a burden which advancing civilization and the growing national sentiment of China will cast off, for it has always been something of an alien religion to the Chinese, and except for their worship of one of the Bodhisattvas, Kwanyin, Goddess of Mercy, it has laid no very great hold upon the affections of the people. Buddhism  
not a great  
power in  
China.

As an indication of humanity's need of a Saviour, Kwanyin is a striking and arresting figure ; for she, most nearly of all the gods of the Chinese pantheon, approaches the figure of Christ in Protestantism, and of the Blessed Virgin in Roman Catholicism : ' She is gentleness and helpfulness personified, especially watching over those engaged in perilous callings, such as sailors ; the patroness of women in all their concerns, especially invoked in cases of childlessness and danger at birth', and the only pity is that she is a purely mythical figure. No scholar ever claimed that she has any historical basis. Kwanyin,  
Goddess of  
Mercy.

<sup>1</sup> Thus the oft-repeated statement that there are 500 million Buddhists is most misleading: the diagram at the end of the chapter illustrates the relative numerical strength of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity.

China, then, like Tibet, has found Buddhism wanting, and has only accepted it in an un-Buddhistic form, and by giving her allegiance to these mythical gods, Amitābha and Kwanyin, has shown her need for the knowledge of God the Father, and of the Divine Son: it was surely the Holy Spirit who guided this great people in their search for light. In the Jōdo and Zen sects, which arose in China (but which we shall study in their Japanese developments), are to be seen the strivings of the Spirit with the Chinese.

They are feeling after God if haply they may find Him, and upon their knowing Him as He is seems to depend in very large measure the future of the world. For the 'Yellow Peril' is a menace indeed if the Chinese, who are one-fifth of the world's population, become materialistic and atheist. But with their splendid patience, their industry, their integrity, their strong family life, and their readiness to suffer, the teeming millions of China are also full of promise of a glorious destiny; the 'Yellow Peril' has become the 'golden opportunity of Christ'. 'Never, surely, was richer freight derelict on the great waters of time!'

### C. IN JAPAN.

Buddhism  
enters  
Japan.

Buddhism was brought to Japan in A. D. 552 by missionaries from Korea, who had received the new religion in the fourth century from China.

As in China, so in Japan Buddhism found strong rivals already in the field—Shintoism, which is a combination of nature-worship and ancestor-worship with the strange cult of the Mikado;<sup>1</sup> and Confucianism, which is chiefly a moral code.

The  
Japanese  
an eclectic.

Like the Chinaman the modern Japanese is an eclectic: he 'draws his patriotism from Shinto, his ethical and social

<sup>1</sup> For the Mikado is descended from the Sun-goddess and the Sun is one of the chief forces of Nature.



‘DERELICT’

life from Confucianism, and his hope of what he regards as salvation from Buddhism'. 'I turn to the Shinto priest in case of public festivals, while the Buddhist priest is my ministrant for funeral services,' says Professor K. Kumé, and he adds, 'I regulate my conduct according to Confucian maxims and Christian morals'.<sup>1</sup>

Thus whilst there is rivalry there is also fusion; and even the old-time worship of trees and serpents and spirits continues to this day a great factor in the religious life of Japan. Rivalry  
and fusion.

The Japanese villager 'supposes the spirits about him as numerous as swarms of mosquitoes', and the dead influence not only men's actions and thoughts but also the conditions of nature: 'they direct the changes of the seasons, the wind and the rain, the good and the bad fortunes of states, and the destinies of individual men.' Spirit-  
worship.

'Ancestor-worship', writes Lafcadio Hearn, 'is probably the most profound and powerful of the emotions of the race—that which especially directs national life and shapes national character. Patriotism belongs to it. Filial piety depends upon it. Family love is rooted in it. Loyalty is based upon it.'

In Japan, therefore, as elsewhere, Buddhism has had to adapt itself to the prevailing spirit-worship; but when this is realized it remains true that the religion of Gautama Buddha has exercised a mighty influence, and is still strongly entrenched in Japan.

Within twenty years of its introduction a Buddhist emperor, Shotoku-Taishi, became the Japanese Asoka of the new religion, proclaiming it the 'foundation for the state and the highest religion in the universe', and for a thousand years Buddhism became the educator of Japan. 'All education was for centuries in Buddhist hands; Bud-

<sup>1</sup> Count Okuma, *Fifty Years of New Japan*, vol. ii, p. 41.

dhism introduced art and medicine, moulded the folk-lore of the country, created its dramatic poetry, deeply influenced politics and every sphere of social and intellectual activity. In a word, Buddha was the teacher under whose instruction the Japanese nation grew up.' And his teaching is to-day embedded in the thought and language of Japan.

Chinese  
schools.

Soon the dominant schools of Chinese Buddhism found their way into Japan, and she herself, with her genius for making foreign imports indigenous, produced her own forms of Buddhism.

Even Shotoku blent Confucian ethics with the Buddhist philosophy he loved to expound, and (though it is probably a forgery by a later eclectic) there is a saying attributed to him that Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism are as stem, branches, and leaves of a single tree, which is eloquent of the impression he left behind him.

Blending of  
Buddhism  
and Shinto.

And as the centre of Buddhism was from the first the Imperial Court, it must needs adapt itself to the Shinto cult. This it did gradually, till in the eighth century by a stroke of genius the earlier Shinto deities were proclaimed as Bodhisattvas, and the Emperor was acknowledged as their representative upon earth.

Buddhism was thus secularized and exploited to unite Church and State in Japan, and though more spiritual forms appeared by way of reaction and revival, it held its ground in this form till the seventeenth century, when Confucianism reasserted itself and the Dominican missions helped in its rout. But in the twelfth century germs of a more spiritual Buddhism bore fruit, and the Christian should pay especial attention to the sects which now enter the arena; for each is a protest against the existing Buddhism, and each makes its appeal to deep-seated instincts of the human soul—instincts which ordinary Buddhism tends to ignore or to snub.

The first of these sects is the Jodo, whose real founder was Honen (1133-1212), and its main tenets are the existence of the soul and salvation by faith in Amida, who countless years ago, they say, took human form and opened the way of salvation to all. Though a mere myth, Amida 'is regarded as the Eternal One, in whom we live and move and have our being'.

The great sects :  
I. Jodo.

This Jodo sect gave birth to an offshoot, the Jodo-Shin (or 'The Pure Land Sect'), which abjures monasticism and allows its priests to marry, making no real distinction between them and the laity. This sect, which is active in educational work and adopts Western methods, is the most popular form of Buddhism at present, and probably includes the most religious of the Japanese Buddhists to-day.

Its founder is said to have died murmuring these words :

His rays of light the world on every side pervade,  
His grace forsakes not one who calls on him for aid.

Another sect which is much nearer to primitive Buddhism is the Zen. It lays stress upon 'enlightenment of mind' rather than faith, and upon stoical character rather than the grace of Amida. It was the creed of the military, and owed much to their support: it is represented by three sub-sects in Japan to-day, and is valuable for the stress it lays upon meditation. No nation can afford to neglect this most difficult art; and Japan owes much to the Zen sect besides—lessons of self-denial and of clear hard-thinking, which have been incorporated into the system of Bushido.

Another form of Buddhism which has exercised a great influence in Japan is the Nichiren sect, also founded in the thirteenth century.

III.  
Nichiren.

'Nichiren', says Professor Harada, 'is the most interesting figure in the whole history of Buddhism in Japan. At

first a priest of the Shingon sect,<sup>1</sup> greatly dissatisfied with the divers divisions and petty rivalries of many of the sects, and indignant at the laxity and worldliness of the priests and believers of all churches, he sought to find a firm foundation for his faith. As a result of fervent studies and fierce struggles, he at last came to the conclusion that 'he was not to trust in human opinions, but in the Sutras left by the great teacher, and he was to decide all questions by them and them only.' His conclusion was, 'Salvation through Faith in the Book'.<sup>2</sup> Japan owes much to him, for he was a true prophet of social righteousness. Yet he too, like Honen, wandered far from the teachings of self-reliance and stoicism given by Gautama.

The failure of  
Dhamma.

The sects of Buddhism in Japan offer an admirable example of what we have found in other countries—that the primitive Dhamma is not good enough, that everywhere it fails to satisfy the cravings and instincts of humanity. And even the great central doctrine of Karma, elsewhere in Buddhist lands so eagerly grasped, has not really gripped the allegiance of the Japanese. Buddhism is too pessimistic to hold the affections of an optimistic people. 'It afforded no bright hope of the future, no ideal of saintly communion; and the deep desire of the Japanese was for something more heartening and assuring.'

What a privilege to be prophets of the Resurrection and of the Communion of Saints to this brilliantly-gifted nation! What joy to tell them that their sunny optimism is not a delusion, that there is deep down at the heart of things a well-spring of abundant life!

Externally the Buddhism of Japan is very similar to that of China, and the deities she worships are much the same. But there are two celestial Buddhas who are rivals to the

<sup>1</sup> Which believes in magic and spells.

<sup>2</sup> *The Faith of Japan*, p. 108.



claim of Supreme Deity, and both are thought of by their followers as Almighty, Eternal, and Creator Gods; these are *Dainichi* (Vairochana) and *Amida* (Amitābha). Of the Bodhisattvas *Kwannon* is the most popular, and is identical with the Chinese Kwanyin; she shares with Amida the sovereignty of the great Paradise into which her followers long to enter. For here, as in the rest of the Buddhist world, it is a Heaven and not Nirvāna that men are seeking; and the belief in a transmigrating soul is common amongst Japanese Buddhists. Celestial  
Buddhas.

To these 'gods' may be added the usual multitude of lesser gods, demons, and saints. Japanese Buddhism is for the most part frankly polytheistic, upon a basis of pantheism.

It is generally agreed that the common people of Japan do not concern themselves with the philosophical and religious ideas of Buddhism; and even the educated classes are mostly indifferent. 'Ask an educated Japanese a question about Buddhism,' says Professor Chamberlain, 'and ten to one he will smile in your face. A hundred to one he knows nothing of the subject and glories in his ignorance.'

For there is no satisfactory life of Gautama Buddha and no manual of Buddhist ethics in Japanese, and even the sacred books have never been translated into the vernacular, but remain in Chinese.

Nor has Buddhism done much for Japan in the moral sphere, great as its services have been in other directions. 'Buddhism,' says Baron Kato,<sup>1</sup> ex-President of the Imperial University—'Buddhism is worthless because the vast majority of the priests are so corrupt.'

As Professor George Knox says, 'Buddhism has had a fair field in Japan, and its outcome has not been elevating; its influence has been aesthetic and not ethical'. For Buddhism has undoubtedly played to the gallery, and

<sup>1</sup> Who is an ardent Buddhist.

promises the people what they want rather than what they need—a sensuous Paradise, and many short-cuts into it!

‘The heart’, says Professor Harada, ‘revives faith in immortality faster than the intellect destroys it.’<sup>1</sup>

Yet, strangely enough, it is the head rather than the heart of Japan which to-day is dissatisfied with Buddhism as a whole:<sup>2</sup> unsatisfying as it is to human instincts, its hold upon the bulk of the Japanese must not be under-estimated. There are over 70,000 Buddhist temples, and over 100,000 monks. ‘The farmers are Buddhists, so are the shop-keepers, so are the rank and file of the people. . . . One has but to learn the Japanese language, and study the literature of to-day’s daily life, to understand what a hold Buddhism has on the thoughts and affections of the people.’

So writes Mr. Arthur Lloyd, and he closes his book, *The Creed of Half Japan*, with an earnest plea for the careful and sympathetic study of Buddhism: ‘Buddhism needs its special preachers—men of sympathy and patience; men who, while being proud of being Christians, are yet willing for Christ’s sake to be followers of S’akyamuni in all things lawful and honest; men who can say to the Buddhist, “I will walk with you, and together we will go to Him to whom you say S’akyamuni himself bore witness”.’

The task of the Christian Church in Japan is surely a fascinating one; for ‘Buddhism was as a lamp shining for a season in the darkness of Asia, but the Sun of Righteousness has arisen, and it is day’.

Surely the Spirit of Christ has brooded over Japan, and in calling men to faith in Amida has prepared them for the fullness of His own Revelation of God.

<sup>1</sup> *The Faith of Japan*, p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> Thus Mr. Sherwood Eddy tells us that a careful estimate shows that of the students of the Imperial University of Tokyo

	450			are reckoned as Buddhists and Shintoists,
	1,550	„	„	Atheists,
and	3,000	„	„	Agnostics.

## ILLUSTRATIVE READINGS

**The Western Paradise of the Chinese Amida.**

(From the *Tsing-tu-Shii*; translated by Dr. J. Edkins.)

There, each from the world that he governs, are found  
Assembled in conference long and profound,  
The ten supreme Buddhas who cease not to tell  
The praise of the land where the great sages dwell.  
For there is no region so happy and blest,  
As the haven of great Amida far in the west.  
On the moment of reaching it by a new birth,  
The material body of men while on earth  
Is exchanged for another ethereal and bright,  
That is seen from afar to be glowing with light.  
Happy they who to that joyful region have gone!  
In numberless *kalpas* their time floweth on.  
Around are green woods, and above them clear skies,  
The sun never scorches, cold winds never rise,  
Neither summer nor winter are there ever known  
In the Land of the Law and the Diamond Throne;  
All errors corrected, all mysteries made clear,  
There rest is unbroken by care or by fear.  
And the truth that before lay in darkness concealed  
Like a gem without fracture or flaw is revealed.

**A Japanese Buddha.**

An extract from *The Praises of Amida*, modern sermons of the  
Shin sect.<sup>1</sup>

‘How can we of ourselves forsake our sins, follow after  
virtue, and break through the flames of Suffering? It is

<sup>1</sup> Translated by the Rev. A. Lloyd.

impossible for us to put our trust in Learning or Philosophy, or in the great majority of religious systems, and if we cannot find some more certain means of Salvation we must remain where we are, hopelessly surrounded by the roaring flames of Suffering that has no end.

But what is that glad sound? It is the name of the Buddha of Endless Light and Life, to whom we ascribe all glory. Surrounded by the flames of Suffering, above, below, and on every hand, we hear the Holy Name of the Buddha of Boundless Light and Life. Three thousand years in the past, three thousand years in the future, can make absolutely no difference to this Name. It has precisely the same virtue, whether in distant India or in near Japan. Nor is it a matter of three thousand years only, nor of India and Japan only. At all times, and in all places, it is the same. This One Name stands revealed in the midst of a world of Shadow and Vision, and it alone is neither Shadow nor Vision. It is revealed in the World, but it belongs not to this world. It is Light. It is the Way. It is Life. It is Power. This name alone has come down from Heaven, the Absolute and Invisible, to Earth, the Finite and the Visible. It alone is the rope which can draw us out from the burning fire of pain, and land us safely in a place of pure and eternal bliss.'

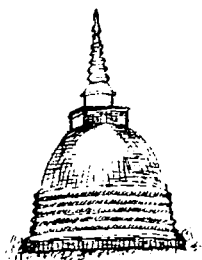
### **The Christ for Japan.**

Long years Thy Shadow, brooding o'er these lands,  
Hath told of Peace and Hope for sinful men ;  
Now turn the Shadow to Reality,  
And bless us as we gather round Thy Feet,  
O Amitābha-Christ, sole Lord of All.

A. LLOYD.

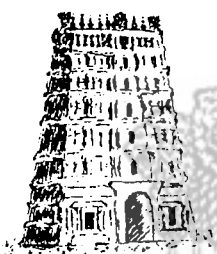
## Some Significant Dates.

A. D.	
50-100	Buddhism enters China.
100	Asvaghosa's Commentaries.
200	Christianity in Britain.
400	Buddhism in Korea.
410	The Romans abandon Britain.
454	Buddhaghosa's Commentaries.
476	The fall of the Western Roman Empire—end of ancient history in the West.
496	Clovis, Emperor of the Franks, baptized.
500-700	Buddhism decadent in India.
552	Buddhism enters Japan.
563	S. Columba at Iona.
569	Birth of Muhammad.
597	S. Augustine in Kent.
600	Nestorian Christianity in China.
570-632	Buddhism in Tibet, Cambodia, Siam, Burma, and Java.
621	Death of Shotoku, the Constantine of Buddhism in Japan.
629-646	Huan Sang in India.
632	Death of Muhammad.
711-713	The Saracens conquer Spain.
719-743	Charles Martel conquers the Saracens.
774	Charlemagne receives the Iron Crown of Lombardy.
806	The Shingon sect of Japanese Buddhism founded.
800-900	Decline of Buddhism in India.
1013	Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury.
1091	The Zen sect of Japanese Buddhism founded.
1096	The Crusades.
1192	Buddhism crushed in Bengal and Bihar.
1200	The Muhammadans conquer Northern India.
1200-1250	The Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Europe.
1224	The Shin sect of Japanese Buddhism founded.
1225	The Nichiren sect of Japanese Buddhism founded.
1250-1300	Dominican missionaries in Japan.



BUDDHISM

130,000,000.



HINDUISM

210,000,000.



CHRISTIANITY

520,000,000.

The Relative Numerical Strengths of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity.

Diagram by Mrs. O. H. McCOWEN.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION: THE BUDDHA AND THE CHRIST

*'I am the Eye of the World.'*—Gautama Buddha.

*'I am the Light of the World.'*—Jesus Christ.

*'Save only the Christ, there is among the founders of religions no figure more moving and pure than that of the Buddha.'*—St. Hilaire.

It seems clear that it is not the mythical Amida and Kwanyin and Avalokiteswara but the historical Gautama with whom the modern world has to do; and in this concluding chapter we may ignore the Buddhism of the northern school. For, as an eminent missionary has so well said: 'Mahāyāna Buddhism is a religion with a rather lofty idea of God among many conceptions of the divine, but without a real faith in the living God; a religion with the idea of a saviour, but without a historical saviour; a religion with a doctrine of divine grace paralysed by the old karma doctrine; a religion with a promise of a present salvation and a future life, which is nevertheless made obscure by the doubts of a recurrent agnostic philosophy that cuts the nerve of all vital ethics and beclouds the hopes of a better future.'<sup>1</sup>

It would seem therefore that Christianity and Northern Buddhism alike have to combat the agnosticism of Gautama, and to show that Stoicism is an inadequate creed for men as we find them.

Buddhists claim that they face life squarely, and they urge

<sup>1</sup> Dr. A. K. Reischauer in the *International Review of Missions*.

us to do so too. I have honestly tried to do so in this book, and I am persuaded that the facts of Buddhist history prove the bankruptcy of agnosticism. In facing the facts of life psychology is not to be ignored ; and psychology shows us the reason for the failure of Buddhism. For prayer, and the longing for knowledge of the Unseen and for communion with the Unseen, are natural instincts which we cannot snub even if we would.

To many of us, again, it seems that modern Buddhists, especially those who are seeking to propagate their views in the West, misunderstand the great Eastern Sage. He can only be understood if we place him in his true context, and see in him a revolt not against theism but against perverted forms of it, not against mysticism but against magic, not against devotion but against fanaticism. Such noble teaching as we find in many of his discourses sprang from no irreligious spirit ; and it seems clear that he only confined himself to preaching ethics because the India of his day needed a moral tonic. He was inspired to administer this tonic, and it is one of the tragedies of history that India failed to blend his strenuous ethic with her passionate mysticism. Had she done that he would have remained as he intended, a reformer, rather than the founder of a new religion ; and his reform would have been a worthy parallel to the ethical monotheism of Hosea and Amos.

How then shall we think of him ? It is a question of more than academic interest.

I believe that we may form a just estimate of him if we accept his descriptions of himself as the 'eye of the world' and as a 'physician of sick souls' ; for he saw more clearly than any of the men of his land the need for righteous living, and he diagnosed with unfailing precision the soul-sickness of humanity. It *is* false desire and selfishness that are at the bottom of most of our troubles, individual and





## PAGODAS IN MANDALAY

Buddhism has still an enormous hold upon its adherents

social. Happiness is indeed the bloom upon virtue and misery the blight upon vice.

But when the disease is diagnosed the next step is to cure it; and surely mankind may find a greater Physician for its ills.

Again, an 'eye' is a wonderful creation, but without the 'Light' it is useless: it gradually atrophies and dies.

Gautama finds his real significance if we put him in the line of prophets of righteousness, but also of prophets of the New Evangel. Buddhism will be reborn and live only as it is brought into relationship with Him who is the Good Physician and Light of the World. As we have seen, this process has already begun: Buddhism lives chiefly because it has ceased to be itself and has adapted itself to human needs. Its dim and shadowy ideal of a Saviour, its aspiration after communion with God, and its longing for certainty and peace in this life and the next will find their full-orbed realization in Christ. Gautama  
a prophet.

The psychology of religion is showing us day by day how naturally the facts of Christianity fit man's deepest needs: how even the Cross, at first so much a stumbling-block, is an answer to a deep-seated longing for Atonement. Buddhism itself has conjured into being the conception of a vicarious suffering throughout the ages which enriches and saves the world, and the history of Buddhism is a magnificent apologetic for Christ, 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world'.

Lest this should seem a mere dogmatic assertion, let us now draw out the main points which have been established by our study of the history of this great religion.

We have seen its origin in the quest of Gautama for an escape from suffering, and in the joy he had in his great experience beneath the Bo-tree. We have studied some of his great lessons—if the gods are immoral man is better The  
history of  
Buddhism  
shows a  
need for  
God.

without them ; if he seeks to be happy let him get rid of the demon of desire : and in this task he must save himself, for there is none other who can help. It is at first a stoical creed, in which there is room for no Saviour or worship or prayer.

Then comes the second stage in which worship is paid to the symbols of the Teacher and his Law—the Wheel, the Bo-tree, and the Foot-print : for already the doctrine by itself is too narrow and too arid for the religious nature of man, who is born to worship and to pray.

Then come the beginnings of the deification of Gautama and of idolatry, and the substitution of ideals which are more natural to the heart of man—a Heaven in place of Nirvāna, a soul in place of an impersonal stream of energy. And now Buddhism is drawing near to the Hinduism it had left, and to other mystical religions. For man is persuaded past all contradiction that he has a soul, and that he is made for a happy social life hereafter as now. Even the Red Indian believes that his faithful dog will go with him to the Happy Hunting Grounds of the next life ! And the Burmese Buddhist speaks of the soul as the 'butterfly', and is buried with a coin between his teeth, presumably to pay the ferryman of some Buddhist Styx !

We have seen further that as Buddhism develops it seeks, consciously or unconsciously, to relate the historical Buddha to a series of such beings, and in most lands to a God who is Origin and Source of the Universe, whilst the figure of Gautama himself gradually undergoes a change from Teacher to Saviour. He is Saviour because of his age-long sacrifice, and men look wistfully for the Coming One who shall nerve their efforts after righteousness. So Stoicism is gradually superseded by that mysticism which is essential to true religion.

Everywhere Buddhism is in itself inadequate to the reli-

gious needs of men. As it enters animistic countries, therefore, we find it contributing a few great ideas, such as that of future reward and punishment, but otherwise becoming itself assimilated to the local beliefs. And everywhere the monasticism essential to Buddhism proves by its failure that man must not be torn out of the natural relationships of life; his instincts declare that the family life is good and not evil. 'The stagnation of so many Asiatic peoples . . . is mainly due to the monastic principle of Buddhism,' says Dr. Hackmann, who has spent twenty years in studying Buddhism as a modern religion, and is a keen and sympathetic observer.

This is how he sums up the results of a very careful and scholarly investigation :

'While not failing to recognize that Buddhism has been of some value for the civilization of the peoples under its influence, nor denying that great and true thoughts have been promulgated by it, above all without minimizing the ever-powerful and admirable personality of the Buddha himself, yet we must admit that as a religion Buddhism is entirely inadequate, and the defect is so closely allied to its deepest principle that it appears very questionable whether it could ever be remedied, except at the price of giving up its own fundamental ideas.'<sup>1</sup>

Can Buddhism then be said to be a serious rival to Christianity? I think it surely may become one; for under its shelter much of the agnosticism and atheism of the age is gathering, and much also of the sentimentalism and hysteria, and there are few who think clearly and soberly.

Buddhists see in Gautama Buddha a sublime figure—calm, serene, gentle, and full of wisdom and love; they conceive of him as the great summing up of an age-long sacrifice.

<sup>1</sup> *Buddhism as a Religion*, pp. 298-9.

believing that for untold ages the Buddha-to-be in animal and human forms was sacrificing himself for mankind, and they come near to worshipping him :

More than the Stars he gave of his eyes,  
More than the Ocean he shed of his blood.

And sentimentalists by thousands, and agnostics by scores, who have been orphaned in the West by losing faith in God, make a God of this great and good teacher.<sup>1</sup> Nor do they pause to reflect that he is dead, utterly beyond reach of their reverence and praise.

Others there are, less ecstatic but more reasonable, who take a stoic attitude towards the world, and whilst they accept the fact that Gautama cannot help them yet maintain that his teaching is all they need. Yet they do not practise the austere life of meditation, nor seek Nirvāna, though they have much to say in praise of 'the Great Peace', as they call it with wearisome reiteration.

A wide-  
spread lie.

And we who are seeking to give to Buddhist peoples a hope by which they may live and die, and a Friendship which will nerve their strivings after goodness, we know how hideous a lie it is which says 'The Buddhists have a religion which is good enough : they get on very well as it is'. 'No one gets on very well without Christ' is the verdict of history.

There lies the whole vital difference between the Faith we offer them and the Law they have. For man is made for God and is restless till he find rest in Him ! Surely this is a lesson writ large on the history we have been studying.

Why  
Gautama  
was  
agnostic.

And Buddhism, if it be revived in its purity, as Western enthusiasts are seeking to revive it, will stultify this lesson and will be a curse and not a blessing. For had Gautama been told of the Living God, whose Law is holy and in

<sup>1</sup> There are said to be half a million Buddhists in Germany.

whom is no darkness, he would surely have abjured his agnosticism. It was only because the gods of his day were unworthy that he bade men leave them alone. What he desired above all else was to help men to be good, to nerve them to fight against sin; and in calling himself 'Teacher', 'Eye', 'Revealer of the Way of Life', he seems to have been half-conscious that there must be One who is Truth and Light and is Himself the Way and the Life!

So, if it be rightly presented, Christianity fulfils Buddhism and meets the needs and yearnings of Buddhist hearts. 'O Christ,' said a Brahman when he first studied the Gospels, Christianity fulfils Buddhism. 'Thou alone art perfect Buddha.'

And yet there are 'lions in the path' which must needs 'Lions in the path.' be slain before this can be accomplished.

Buddhism, for instance, cuts at the very root of religion when it teaches that man can do without the grace of God. Again, its claim that Gautama was omniscient cannot be allowed or even taken very seriously, whilst its doctrine of transmigration is false and pernicious in its results, and its ideal, Nirvāṇa, is not good enough for most of us.

We are 'social animals', and we want to enjoy Heaven together, and not go out into the darkness alone!

How few of us are stoics. We are born for friendship, and without it we find life not worth living. Friendships, human and Divine, are the greatest gifts life has to offer, and as we look at Buddhism with its cold, calm, mathematical conception of the world are we not glad to turn away to One who is alive and very dear? Buddhism is the imitation of Gautama: Christianity is the friendship of Christ. A vital difference. 'I have called you friends,' He says to us in kingly tones: and shall we not all treasure this friendship, and seek to share it with others?

We must let no one persuade us that this friendship can be kept to ourselves, or that missionaries are tactless busy-

bodies in seeking to introduce their Buddhist friends to Christ !

The  
missionary  
motive.

For we are men under authority ; our Friend is also our King, and His command, 'Go ye into all the world', is motive enough for us : and the story of His life and death and resurrection, what are they but a Gospel of good news which it is a priceless privilege to carry ?

The Good  
News we  
have to  
tell.

Instead of myth and fable we offer men the fact of Christ ; instead of a lonely struggle after righteousness we offer them the yoke of Christ's love. And how naturally and easily it fits them at every stage of life : how it lightens the burden which all men have to bear ! Let all who would study Buddhism study also the psychology of the religious life : Christianity will be seen to be more natural after all.

Think of the joy of men who live under the dark shadow of Transmigration when the glamour of the Resurrection breaks in upon them. Think of the forgiveness of sins when it comes home to men who live in the apathy of fatalism. Such is the difference between the two 'Gospels'.

'I cannot help you ; work out your own salvation,' said Gautama Buddha :

'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,' says Jesus Christ.

'I am but your teacher,' said the Buddha :

'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' says the Christ.

'All is fleeting and transient ; as a hog to the trough, man comes again and again to the birth,' said Gautama :

'I am the Resurrection and the Life,' says Christ : 'he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die.'

The Power  
of the  
Gospel.

And as we tell men of this great fact strange things begin to happen ; men turn from darkness to light ; new life stirs in ancient nations ; young peoples leap out of savagery to strong manhood ; for the Church of Christ is the greatest

nation-building power the world has seen. Men go out seeking to build the 'city of God', and great empires are the by-product of their obedience. The verdict of history is not to be ignored; and at this time there are wonderful opportunities of making history!

If a man would use his life to good effect he cannot find a better calling than that of a missionary in the East; for never since the world began has there been such an opportunity as now presents itself in the ferment of the Eastern nations. Never was the struggle between God and Satan more intense. If these nations do not find Christ they will go over to the Evil One.

We began our study of Buddhism with a reference to the great nationalist movements of the day. Let us also close it with them. For assuredly they are of God, and it is for the Church to capture them for Christ. The National Movements in the East.

Can Buddhism, then, cope with them and guide them? Is there anything to be said for the European and other 'Buddhists' who are bidding Burma and Ceylon, China and Japan, see in the Dhamma the way of national salvation?

At the best we can only regard them as deluded. For a religion which is to make nations great must have a higher ideal of the world than Buddhism, which seeks to escape it; it must have a more constraining motive than self-interest, which is the corner-stone of the Buddhist religion.

'The Kingdom of God', is that not the true goal?

'For My sake and the Gospel's', is that not the true motive? Buddhism impotent to guide them.

Buddhism, since the days of its first enthusiasm, has been a dying creed, unable to call out any great heroism and self-sacrifice, totally inadequate for personal or social regeneration. It is a religion, not for the young and vigorous, but for the old and world-weary. This is the belief of its own adherents.

But Christianity, in spite of the failure of the nations



which take its sacred name, is alive and is just beginning to enter upon its inheritance. For Gautama was human and is dead : Jesus Christ is from Heaven, and is alive for evermore.

It is this fact—the fact of the Resurrection—which more than anything else distinguishes Christianity from Buddhism : instead of a dim yearning for the Loving One we can point to a Living Saviour to whom the Church is witness, and of whom the Saints are the abiding proof.

And if the Resurrection is a fact, then the romantic Ethic of Jesus is vindicated and the ‘unpractical graces’ of Love and Hope and Faith are enthroned in the world of eternal values.

The Power at the heart of things is romantic and passionate, not stoical and indifferent.

So the Grace of God supersedes the Law of Karma : vitality and growth and freedom take the place of legalism and mechanical justice and repression. This is our Gospel to hearts already yearning for something more than sage advice and exhortation, already despairing of the frail bark of their own merit as they toss upon life’s stormy sea. And we have to show them that this self-despair is the beginning of wisdom ; that the old self-reliance which Gautama enjoined upon them is a delusion and a snare.

Instead of endless transmigration in the maze of time, against which conscience and intuition rebel, we tell them of Life Eternal in the Heavens.

‘Go ye therefore into all the world, and preach the good tidings unto every creature. . . . And ye shall be My witnesses . . . unto the uttermost part of the world.’

The Teacher who made this tremendous claim upon man’s allegiance was more practical after all than he who centred man’s faith upon an ethical creed ; for loyalty is a greater motive than self-interest, and romantic passion

seems to succeed where reasonable calculation fails. Man is essentially a lover, and in the great struggle of the religions the victory remains with love.

## ILLUSTRATIVE READINGS

(From '*The Heart of Buddhism*.')

### Do the Dead meet again?

*The Story of Nokula's Father.*

(*Anguttara Nikāya*, iv.)

ONCE the Blessed One was dwelling amongst the Bhaggas on the Peak of Sumsumaro in the Bhesakala Garden of the Deer Park ; and taking his robe and bowl, he came to the home of Nokula's father, and sat him down upon the seat they had prepared for him. Then the good man of the house, Nokula's father, came with his wife to the Blessed One, and sitting on one side, addressed him thus : 'O sir, the mother of Nokula came at a very tender age to my home. And since that day she has not, I think, been unfaithful to me even in thought. I would be with her in the next life as well as in this.'

And the mother of Nokula also came to the Blessed One and said : 'O sir, since I was brought as a very young wife to the house of Nokula's father he has not, I think, been unfaithful to me even in thought. I would fain be his in the next life as in this.'

Then the Blessed One spoke : 'If man and wife wish to be together in the next life as in this, let them be peers in faith, peers in morality, and peers in liberality and wisdom : then shall they meet in the next life.'

When man and wife are peers in chastity,  
 In faith and righteousness and charity,  
 When each the other serveth lovingly,  
 Then shall they dwell in bliss and health.  
 Their foes shall grieve to see their wealth :  
 And since in all things they are peers,  
 Rebirth in heavenly realms is theirs,  
 And gladly each with other shares  
 The bliss they've won in lower spheres !

## NOTE.

This is a question which naturally exercises the mind of Buddhists, and the chances of reunion are, according to this teaching, so slender that the most orthodox believer is often a heretic in this one respect. When we reflect that it is the common belief that a good woman will be reborn as a man, it will be seen how far the teaching here given is from satisfying the craving of their hearts.

## I.

**The Gospel of Reason.**

(The *Sujāta Jātaka*.)

IN days of old, when Brahmādatta was king in Benares, the Bodhisat was born into a family of position, and was named Sujāta. His grandfather sickened and died, and his father was exceeding sorrowful. Removing the dead man's bones from their place of burial and depositing them in a grave near his own home, he resorted to it thrice a day to weep. Almost dead with grief, he neither ate nor drank, till the Bodhisat resolved to assuage his father's grief. Finding a dead buffalo, he put grass and water before it and began to entreat it to eat and drink. Folk noted his folly and chid him, saying : 'What is this, Sujāta ? Can a dead buffalo eat grass and drink water ?' But he paid no heed,

but rather the more cried out, 'O buffalo, eat and drink !' till they concluded that he was bereft of sense and went to tell his father. And he, forgetting his grief for the dead in his anxiety for the living, came to the place and asked him what he meant. 'Here', replied Sujāta, 'are the feet and the tail, and every part of the buffalo complete. If I am a fool to give grass and water to this dead animal, whom I see before me, art thou wiser, my father, to weep for him of whom nothing remains ?'

'True, my son,' replied his father, 'like water upon fire are thy words : they have extinguished my grief. I give thee thanks.'





सत्यमेव जयते

## EPILOGUE

### THE DEMON OF DESIRE

#### A DIALOGUE

Two Burmese students, Maung Ba Gyi and Maung Po Tun, who were reading in Calcutta for their M.A. degree, decided to spend their April holiday in Darjeeling.

The keen air and glorious views soon filled them with energy, and they set out on a long tramp through Sikkim. Both were Buddhists, but one had joined a Paramat sect, which has deserted the agnosticism of Gautama and believes in God, thinking of Him as Eternal Mind. As they tramped, passing now through some dense forest, now climbing some steep spur of the Himalayas and gazing up to the 'eternal snows', they began to talk of the great religion which had taken its birth on the foot-hills of the neighbouring state of Nepal. Gazing down upon the shimmering plains below, with their countless villages and bare sun-scorched stretches, Po Tun began to speak: 'It was, I expect, some such scene as this which first stirred the heart of the young Gaudama.<sup>1</sup> These toiling millions of his fellow-countrymen—what could he do for them? How bring them up out of the swelter and the glare to some cool summit? How win for them a way of escape?'

'You are poetical to-day,' said Ba Gyi. 'I sometimes feel that the great teacher was so obsessed with the sufferings of humanity that he forgot the Creator of all these wonders. Must not some mighty hand have reared this great snow-barrier, and spread these vast plains?'

<sup>1</sup> This is the Burmese pronunciation of Gautama.

‘It may be,’ said Po Tun, with a shrug, ‘but whether it be so or not, what matter? Our business is not with any God, but with ourselves.’

‘Well, I can’t agree. If there be a God, as nature and history suggest, then our business is surely with Him. If He sustains and rules the world, it seems foolish to ignore Him. “Perishing shall we not seek a refuge?”’

“Every man is his own refuge”—*Attahi attano natho*’—replied his companion. ‘I, for one, do not need any helper.’

The topic dropped, and as evening came on they were glad to see the dark roofs of a Tibetan monastery rising in front of them and to claim the hospitality of the Lamas.

One of these had been to Burma, and in his company the evening passed very pleasantly as they stretched their tired limbs by the log-fire and talked over the day’s adventures.

In the early morning, as dawn was lighting up the snowy summits of the hills, Po Tun called his drowsy friend, and together they explored the dark recesses of the monastery. Here were red and blue and yellow ‘Guardians of the Four Quarters’, and strange paintings of gods unknown in the South; strangest of all the image of Dolma, Mother of Buddhas, whom the people love and who may be approached at any moment without the aid of Lama or incantation.

‘See how hungry the human heart is!’ said Ba Gyi. ‘Gaudama tried to make men all stoics; but never will the mysticism of the heart of man be killed! It is all written in stone upon the monuments in Calcutta Museum.’

‘I should like to visit them with you,’ said Po Tun, ‘and get your interpretation. But what are these extraordinary objects in front of the shrine?’

‘They are skulls and other stage-properties belonging to our friends the Lamas! Fear plays an essential part in the

religion of these Tibetan Buddhists, and it is almost true to say that the Buddhism of Tibet is devil-worship. They long for some power stronger than the devils who haunt these hillsides and crouch in every dark forest-glade. Yet they know the essentials of Gaudama's teaching. Look at this curious wall-painting of the Wheel of Life. It is an attempt to summarize in pictorial form the whole Gospel of Buddha.

'The black demon is *Tanhā*, unworthy desire; the animals at the hub are *Moha*, stupidity, the hog; *Dosa*, anger, the snake; and *Raga*, lust, the eagle.

'These cardinal vices are all manifestations of *Tanhā*. Look how the demon is clutching the wheel; if he could be killed and the hub broken then the six compartments of the wheel would fall apart, and transmigration be at an end. How skilfully the artist has depicted the different phases of life—the world of men, of animals, of ghosts and of giants, the hell and the heaven—through which even the Buddha had to pass. It is good teaching! The only demon we need fear is the Demon of Desire; and no one can cast him out for us, but only we ourselves.

'I agree', said Ba Gyi, 'that the Demon of Self is at the bottom of most of the world's sorrow and suffering. There is much truth in this teaching. Yet I doubt if it is very practicable. I've never met a Buddhist who really succeeded in killing *Tanhā*. Try as we may, the devil is scotched, not killed.

'It is false psychology to strive to suppress our emotional nature. For it is the most fundamental part of us; suppress it in one direction, it breaks out in another! I believe it is a truth which all psychologists accept, that the best way, often the only way, to get rid of a bad passion is to replace it with a good one. Emotion must be sublimated, not suppressed.



*'Kill that devil!* That is what we all desire to do ; but how? He has more lives than the cat, and more heads than the hydra !

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out ; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.”

‘It is a true picture of the soul of many a Bhikkhu, who has honestly striven to cleanse himself. If you study the *Patimokkha* you will see how awful were the temptations of these men, even in the early days of enthusiasm.’

‘Finish the parable, which is somehow familiar to me.’

‘It is a parable of Jesus, that Master of them who know. “Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there ; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”’

‘It is a terrible story ! What is the alternative? If a man cannot himself kill the Demon of Self, to whom shall he look?’

‘Well, as you know, I am a Paramat and not a Christian ; but I believe the Christians are right. If there be a God, must He not be such as their Christ? And He had unlimited power over devils ; even the devil of self seems to have been obedient to Him.

‘I heard somewhere words which have haunted me : “If self is on the throne ruling, Christ is on the Cross dying. If Christ is on the throne ruling, self is on the Cross dying.”’

‘Explain.’

‘I can only tell you what our Philosophy Professor told me ; Christ knew the great truth that one passion can only be cast out by another ! So He made devotion to Himself

the main thing in His system. He found religion a rite ; He left it a passion for Himself.'

'What has that to do with the Crucifixion, which always seems to me a tragic blunder?'

'By dying He showed how God loves men ; for it is a picture in time of God's eternal heart of love. Christ might have been a world-ruler, but He chose to die upon the Cross. If, then, men gazed steadfastly at this great and amazing love, must not love be born in their hearts in response? Man's gratitude for God's generosity—that is Christianity ! And this passion of holy love is alone able to cast out the devil of impure love.'

'It certainly seems to fit in with human instincts ; as I see men in college and elsewhere they seem to me to be essentially lovers ; and this is the best thing about them. For most are fools and many are deliberately wrong-headed ; yet all love.'

'Yet Gaudama said, *Pemato jayati soko*, "from love springs sorrow."'

'The two teachings are not so much alike as is often made out.'

'Yes, and in the region of the Will too they differ profoundly :

I am the captain of my soul,  
I am the master of my fate !

says Buddhism ; but Christianity confesses :

My will is not my own  
Till Thou hast made it Thine ;  
If it would reach a monarch's throne,  
It must its crown resign.

In short, Buddhism reaches a stoic self-mastery ; Christianity a passionate self-surrender.'

'Well, if you can convince me that the Buddha's method fails, I'll be open to conviction that the claims of Christ are

true ! For the best test of a religion is the practical one.—does it work ?’

‘You are right ; and the best way to convince ourselves is to look steadily at ourselves. We talk much of stoic fortitude and of self-control. Yet a glance from a pair of dark eyes, or a wanton gesture, and we are as clay. Are we honest with ourselves ? And think of the murders in Burma. After twenty centuries of Buddhism our people are perhaps the most passionate in the world !’

When they returned to Calcutta they paid a visit to the archaeological section of the Museum, and Ba Gyi showed his friend the infallible proofs, which history has written in letters of stone for all to read, that stoicism is not a good enough religion for the heart of man ; if he is denied a God, he will create one.

They began with the simple stone coffer which contained the ashes of the great Stoic, and stood in reverent silence before this most ancient of Indian monuments. Then they passed on to the pillars of Asoka, and spoke of his greatness and enthusiasm for the ‘Good Law’. And when they came to the great Barhut rail, Ba Gyi pointed out to his companion the Wheel, the Bo-tree, the lotus, and other symbols of the religion.

‘There are symbols in plenty,’ he said, ‘but no images. Buddhism was afraid of idolatry, and at the time this rail was made, about 400 years after the birth of Gaudama, there was still no figure of him. But let us go into the next room.’

They passed into the gallery which contains the Gandhāra sculptures, and Po Tun exclaimed at once : ‘The Buddha has become a god ! Look at these haloes everywhere, and the worship given him by kings !’

‘Yes,’ said Ba Gyi, ‘and this is not the end. Here in the next room he has lost his characteristic pose of calm meditation ; see, his legs are no longer crossed, and his

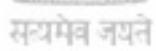
head is crowned with a tiara like that of Vishnu ; he is now a member of the Hindu Pantheon.'

'And the date of the statue?'

'About A. D. 500-700. It belongs to the period of the decline ; and here we come to the utter ruin of Buddhism in the land of its birth. See these female figures ! They represent Dolma or Tara the Mother of Buddhas, and if you go upstairs to the Tibetan Room you will see how foul are the rites associated with this Tantric phase of Buddhism. The emotion of the human heart must not be crushed, or it will find some perverted expression. Buddhism began in India as a stoic agnosticism ; it ended as a voluptuous polytheism. Religion and the sexual life both spring from the depths of man's emotional nature, and if a pure religion be denied him, his religious instincts will become perverted into a horrible sexualism.'

'Come away,' said Po Tun, 'I've seen enough to make me wonder whether the Good Law is as reasonable as it claims to be, and whether, after all, a divine sanction is not a healthier and saner motive than self-interest.'

'The love of God seems to me the truest incentive, and I incline to believe that Christ was right when He said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father", and when He laid before His followers the high motive, 'For My sake'. If so, what of Buddhism? It would need to die to its most cherished beliefs. Yet it is already full of belief in the supernatural, and it would die only that it might live. For if Christ be true, He came to fulfil and not to destroy. What if the Christ be indeed the fulfilment of the Dhamma, supplying the motive-power to its attainment? What if he be the Truth, and Kwanyin and Avalokiteswara—gracious figures though they are—be but the echoes of a cry, the fantasy of hungry human hearts?'



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PRINTED IN ENGLAND  
AT THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS





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