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B U D D H I S M

IN SOUTHERN ASIA

BY

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For Forty Years a Missionary in Burma



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IV

BUDDHISM IN SOUTHERN ASIA

I. Introductory.—I. *Importance of the Study.*—

The importance of the study of Buddhism is evident in the fact that for more than twenty centuries it has swayed the destiny of uncounted millions of men. Having its origin in that portion of the famous and fertile plain of the Ganges still occupied by the ancient cities of Patnā (Pāṭaliputra), Benares (Kāśī), and Oudh (Ayothiā), it has spread in varying form over vast regions of Southern, Central, and Eastern Asia and their adjoining islands. A part of this Gangetic territory belonged to Magadha, so celebrated in Buddhist annals, now known as Behār, a corruption of Vihāra Land, which was so named on account of the great number of sacred buildings (vihāra) erected for monks and for Buddhist observances.

2. *Two Great Schools of Buddhism.* —The different phases which Buddhism has assumed naturally arrange themselves in two great divisions, the Southern School, also called the Hīna-yāna, “Little Vehicle,” and the Northern School, also called the Mahā-yāna, “Great Vehicle.” The Southern School prevails in Ceylon, Burma, and Siam and is undoubtedly a much older and purer form of Buddhism. It was introduced into Ceylon in the third century B. C. by Mahinda, the son of the great Buddhist King Aśoka,

probably before any essential differences began to mar the uniformity of Buddhist doctrine and practice. This view is sustained by the fact that sacred buildings and records in Ceylon vary little from what is presented in the Piṭakas.

3. *Buddhism and Ancient Cults.*—It may here be noted that although Buddhism of the Southern School has established itself in Ceylon, Burma, and Siam, it has never succeeded in driving out the most ancient cults of serpent worship and spirit worship. While the people of these countries regard Buddhism as their religion, the elder cults are intimately mixed with it in the belief and daily practices of the common people. So true is this that the English government officer in Burma, detailed to be the compiler of the census of 1891, took the position in his chapter on Buddhism that animism under a veneering of Buddhism was really the practical religion of the masses. It must, however, be acknowledged that the people of Burma, Ceylon, and Siam regard Buddhism as their religion notwithstanding the power which demon worship and other local superstitions exert over them. Centuries of Buddhism have accustomed the people to talk of Buddha and his doctrine, to observe the religious festivals, to maintain the Order of the Yellow Robe, and thereby to conceal from the eyes of the uninitiated the network of heterodox ideas and practices which lie beneath the surface of Buddhist forms and observances. Many of the educated monks and laity are devout students of the sacred books of the Southern School and strongly deprecate these popular cults as heterodox.

4. *Is Buddhism a Religion?* — In the consideration

of Buddhism the question arises whether it is strictly a religion. Writers are accustomed to treat it as such, but in its primitive form it lacks important notes of a religion and is really a pessimistic system of philosophy. It has moral teaching, but morality is not religion. In all its efforts to solve the problem of human existence and devise a way of deliverance from physical ills and moral evils, it has no idea of a supreme, infinitely holy, eternal God and of man as a sinful being whose duty is to bring his moral nature into harmony with that God. Without a God, without any supernatural revelation, without a Savior to make possible a real, pure, blissful, eternal deliverance from sin, without prayer, without real worship, without duties essentially religious, it must be denied the name of religion. Yet as millions regard it as a religion, it is desirable to consider carefully its author, and its principles and doctrines.

5. *Relation of Buddhism to Brahmanism.*—At the time of Gautama's birth, Magadha and the adjacent countries were under the sway of Brahmanism. It was formerly thought that Gautama's main purpose was to be a great reformer and to found a religious system which would be a protest against Brahmanism. But studious investigation shows that there is no real evidence that he ever intended to protest against and antagonize Brahmanism by the establishment of a new religion. He did indeed reject the supernatural revelation, sacerdotalism, priestly claims, and minute ritual of Brahmanism; but he accepted many of its pre-existing opinions and embodied them in his system, with some modifications. The Brāhmans believed that all personal existence is an unreality due to ignorance

and illusion. By dispelling these the soul ended its sufferings and sorrow and was re-absorbed in Brahm, the impersonal universe. Gautama adopted ignorance and illusion as the ground of human existence. By grasping thoroughly the fact of ignorance and illusion as the cause of existence, escape was made into the unconscious calm of Nirvāṇa. The Brāhmans held the doctrine of metempsychosis, which was founded on the principle that punishment or reward must inevitably follow every act of a man and that his present condition is due to the result of the good or evil done in previous existences. Gautama rejected the idea of a soul whose identity continued through successive rebirths, but he otherwise adopted this principle in his doctrine of transmigration with its numberless existences of evil and suffering. Gautama accepted the Brahmanical doctrine of asceticism, shorn of self-inflicted penances and tortures, and made its principle, that renunciation of the world as evil is the true basis of life, the foundation of his principle of his Order of Monks, or Mendicants. In all this Gautama stands forth in the rôle of a quiet reformer whose separation from his ancestral faith gradually widened as time passed.

6. *Sources of Information.*—The sources of information are the Three Piṭakas, or Baskets, accepted as authentic and authoritative Scriptures by the Southern School. There is not space for a critical discussion of the formation of the Piṭakas. However, it may be stated that there is no evidence that Gautama ever wrote down any of his precepts, much less any one of the books of the canon. The forty-five years of his ministry were given to the oral statement of

his doctrine. It is not certain how the present books of the Three Baskets, or Collections, the Sutta Piṭaka, the Vinaya Piṭaka, and the Abhidhamma Piṭaka were collected. The common Buddhist statement is that the canon was settled at the First Council at Rājagṛiha in the *was*, or Lenten period, immediately following the death of Gautama. After having been handed down orally for about one hundred years, divisions arose among the monks on account of relaxation in the rules, and the Second Council assembled at Vesālī where the rules of the Saṅgha were again set forth and confirmed. Afterward schismatic schools arose and the great Buddhist king Aśoka convened the Third Council at Pāṭaliputra (Patnā), about B. C. 242, at which the canon was again rehearsed and established in its present form. This statement involves too much of myth to be accepted in its entirety. It is exceedingly doubtful whether the First Council ever had any existence. If it ever convened, it could not have been more than a mere local gathering to consider some arrangement for carrying on the teaching of Gautama and does not deserve the name of a Saṅgīti. The Second Council also was a purely local one and bears a very uncertain relation to the canon. When, however, we come to Aśoka's Council we stand on firm historical ground. There is every appearance that up to the time of this Council there had been a gradual growth in the Buddhist canon and that finality of form and content was given to it at Pāṭaliputra (Patnā), B. C. 242. The argument sustaining this statement requires too much space to be given here. It is impossible to say just how much of this mass of sacred writings sets forth the actual life and doctrine

of Gautama, but there is little doubt that the fundamental teachings, like the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Nidāna or Twelve-linked Chain of Causality, and Nirvāṇa belong to Gautama. The myth and fable which gathered about Gautama through the glowing imagination of fervid disciples is seen in the 550 Jātakas, Birth-stories, many of which are modifications of Indian folk-lore and are undoubtedly of late growth. However, in examining Buddhism of the Southern School the canon must be taken as accepted by its disciples. In the midst of all that is doubtful, salient events of Gautama's life rise into a clear certainty, like the Great Renunciation, the Enlightenment, and the First Sermon, which are essential to the understanding of Buddhism itself.

II. **Life of Gautama.**—I. *His Birth.*—From the sacred books we learn that Gautama was born as the son of a Śākya chief, Śuddhodana, of purest Kshatriya race at Kapilavastu in Kosala (modern Oudh). The traditional date of his birth, about B. C. 542, is doubtless too early by at least half a century. Gautama was a family name, for the child was called Siddhārtha, “the one who has accomplished his purpose.” The myth of his incarnation was devised to enhance his glory. When the time for birth came he is represented as descending from the Tushita Heaven in the form of a white elephant—regarded by the Buddhists as an exceedingly precious and auspicious object—and entering the womb of his mother Māyā. The hermit Asita, informed concerning the child by rejoicing divinities, repaired to the palace, and seeing him surrounded by heavenly beings, predicted his future arrival at the glorious state of Buddhahood.

These stories are too crude and material to be compared in any way with those which attend the birth of Christ.

2. *Youth and Marriage*.—Gautama grew up in the midst of the wealth, display, and pleasures of a royal palace. He married his cousin Yaśodharā, and in his twenty-ninth year he became the father of a son, Rāhula. For a long time his mind had been pondering on the ills and sufferings of human life and the duty of renouncing the world and entering upon the poverty, loneliness, and wandering of a mendicant life. The legend of the four visions, under the forms of a man decrepit with old age, of a man emaciated through sickness, of a decaying corpse, and of a lonely hermit, might naturally grow up through the insistent teaching of Gautama in regard to the impermanence of human existence as shown by old age, sickness, and death, and the only escape through the solitary path of worldly renunciation by entering the mendicant's life. The Great Renunciation must rest upon a solid basis of fact. Buddhists regard it as one of the three great central events of Gautama's life. In it he personally embodies his full conviction of the necessity of complete rupture with all that gives pleasure in earthly existence. Doubtless words of the Khaggavisāna-sutta embody his thought: "He who has compassion on his friends and confidential companions loses his own advantage, having a fettered mind; seeing this danger in friendship, let one wander alone like a rhinoceros." In his child he saw the strongest fetter that bound him to the world. Further delay would be fatal. With graphic power the story tells of the last yearning look at wife and child, the crushing

down of intense desire for one final clasping of his son in his arms, and the almost mad haste with which he goes forth from the palace to mount his horse and hasten beyond the reach of father and friends, and, divesting himself of his princely apparel, to enter upon the life of a wandering mendicant.

3. *Gives up Austerities.*—For a time he became the disciple of two philosophers, Ālāra and Uddaka, at Rājagṛiha, but their teaching failed to convince him that there was salvation in philosophy. He turned to extreme physical austerities and mortified the body till even, as the story runs, he ate only one kernel of grain a day. After having fallen one day in a swoon to the ground, he discarded physical austerities as useless and sought out a place of undisturbed solitude. There is no reason to doubt the general historical truth of this statement.

4. *Attains Enlightenment and Buddhahood.*—In his solitude he reached a great epoch in his life. Seating himself under a banyan tree (*ficus religiosa*), for forty-nine days, he gave himself up to profound meditation, and at last attained by it a full knowledge of the way of salvation. He passed through the stages of Jhāna in spite of the assaults of the tempter Māra, who sought to deter him by awakening the memories of home, picturing the carnal delight of life, and presenting visions of an environment of horrible demons and monsters. Quelling their temptations, he rose through the successive stages of the remaining four “attainments.” Blinding illusions of ignorance and error disappeared, and the brilliant illumination of the Great Enlightenment filled his mind. He had attained Buddhahood. He had become a

Buddha (*budh*, to know), an Enlightened One. Self-wrought virtue through countless transmigrations had achieved deliverance from the whirlpool of suffering existences, and the goal of Nirvāṇa was at hand.

5. *Proclaims His Buddhahood.*—The attainment of Buddhahood involved the proclamation of the Enlightenment. Gautama at first shrank from this. Māra, the Tempter, was the author of the evil suggestion to avoid preaching the doctrine; but Great Brahmā is represented as descending from the heavens and earnestly exhorting the hesitant Gautama, saying: “Rise up, O Spotless One, and unclosethe gates of Nirvāṇa. Rise up and look upon the world lost in suffering. Rise up, go forth and proclaim the doctrine.” This fervid exhortation decided the mind of Gautama, and he unwaveringly pursued his ministry from the age of thirty-five years until his death, when he was eighty years old.

6. *Wins His First Five Disciples.*—He started forth to find his first two teachers, but they had died. Hearing that the five hermits with whom he associated in his ascetic life at Uruvelā were in the Deer Park at Benares, he hastened to meet them. On the way he encountered Upaka, an ascetic, who, seeing the radiant face of Gautama, inquired what doctrine he had discovered through which his countenance beamed with such happiness. Gautama answered with confident joy: “I follow no Teacher; I have overcome all foes and all stains; I am superior to all men and all gods; I am the absolute Buddha; I am going now to Benares to set in motion the Wheel of the Law as a king the triumphant wheel of his kingdom. I am the Con-

queror." Continuing his journey he met the five ascetics, who, notwithstanding their predetermined opposition and chilly civility, were soon converted, and with himself formed the first Saṅgha (Order of Monks) of six members. In the Deer Park at Benares Gautama delivered to these five disciples his first and renowned sermon, called "The Discourse Setting in Revolution the Wheel of the Law." He announced his fundamental doctrines of the Four Noble Truths, and the Noble Eightfold Path, which will be considered later. There are only brief personal notices of Gautama in his forty-five years' ministry. He was accustomed to itinerate for about eight months of the year, but the months of the rainy season were spent in retirement, meditation, and the instruction of his disciples. On a hill, Gayāsīsa, he preached the famous Fire Sermon, in which he declared that "everything is burning," and with many illustrations represented all life to be flame. Early in his ministry his great disciples, Sāriputra, Moggallāna, Ānanda, Upāli, and Kāśapa gathered about him. His disciples came largely from rich and prosperous families.

7. *Closing Period of His Ministry.*—As Gautama's ministry draws to a close the records become full and graphic in their statements, especially in "The Book of the Great Decease." On his last journey to Kuśinagara, where he died, his zeal to enlighten his disciples in the truth became intensely fervid. There is something profoundly pathetic as the last months of his long life are ebbing away in the re-iteration of his gloomy pessimistic doctrines of the only solution of the problem of existence. Near Vesālī he became seriously ill, and the favorite disciple Ānanda, in

view of Buddha's not distant demise, begged that final instructions should be given about the Saṅgha. Gently, yet with a tone of astonishment at the apparent failure of Ānanda to grasp the fullness of the doctrine, he answers: "What, then, Ānanda, does the Order expect of me? I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine; for in respect of the truth, the Tathāgata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher who keeps something back. Surely, should there be any one who harbors the thought, 'It is I who will lead the Brotherhood'; or 'The Order is dependent on me,' it is he who should lay down instructions in any matter concerning the Order. Now the Tathāgata harbors no such thoughts. Why then should he leave instructions in any manner concerning the Order? I, too, O Ānanda, am now grown old and full of years, my journey is drawing to a close. I have reached my sum of days. I am turning eighty years of age. And just as a worn out cart can only with much additional care be made to move along, so, methinks, the body of Tathāgata can only be kept going with much additional care. . . . Therefore, be ye lamps unto yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp. Hold as a refuge to the truth. Look not for refuge to any one besides yourselves." Later he announced to a great assembly of monks at Vesālī that his life would close at the end of three months, and concluded his discourse with these words: "Behold now, monks, I impress it upon you; all things are subject to the law of dissolution; press on earnestly to perfection; soon the Tathāgata's final extinction will

take place; at the end of three months the Tathāgata will enter on extinction.”

8. *Gautama's Last Days and Death.*— He then bade farewell to Vesālī with a long, parting look, and journeying on, gave instruction wherever he stopped for rest. At Pāvā a goldsmith named Chunda prepared and offered a rich meal of rice and pork, which produced a violent dysentery. Notwithstanding his illness he started for Kuśinagara, and after resting many hours by the river Kukushtā, half way on his journey, he at last reached a grove of trees outside that city. The hand of death was upon him. He lay down on a couch placed between two śāl trees. He dispatched a comforting message to Chunda, begging him to feel no regret at the result of his offering, soothed the grief-stricken Ānanda with words of love and approval, entered into a discussion with the Brāhman Subhadra and converted him, proclaimed that after his death the Law would be in his place as teacher, and asking that anyone who was still troubled by doubts would mention them that he might remove them and receiving no answer, declared that all present had entered into The Path, beyond danger of return, which would lead to Nirvāṇa. A brief silence followed, and then the last words of this Great Teacher fell on their ears: “Behold, now, mendicants, I say to you, everything that exists must pass away; work out your own perfection with diligence.” The cremation of the body followed; and, notwithstanding the extravagance of statements which the growth of legend has gathered about the account, it was doubtless attended with great pageantry.

9. *His Character.*— In this brief outline of the prin-

cipal events of the life of Gautama there is the portrait of a man of high thought, lofty morality, and virtuous conduct, who was intensely honest in his pursuit of truth, and fearless and patient in the preaching of his doctrine. But beautiful as his life and character appear, they fall far short of the divine beauty which shines forth in the life and character of the Perfect Man, whose sinlessness, lofty self-sacrifice, full knowledge of God and men, apprehension of infinite truth, and revelation of that truth, are faultless and complete. Gautama groped after the truth and thought that he had found it in a one-sided system of worldly philosophy. Christ knew the truth, and His revelation of it reached all the needs and conditions of men's natures and became a Gospel to them. Gautama preached a doctrine of a self-wrought righteousness, difficult of attainment, but most pleasing to the pride of the human heart. Christ preached the doctrine of a righteousness which comes not by works, but by the gracious assistance of God through faith on our part, a doctrine distasteful to the pride and self-love of men. Both led lives of self-denial and self-abnegation, but in very different ways. One decried human life itself as valueless and sought its extinction by the severance of all social ties in the seclusion of a recluse; the other exalted human life as the precious gift of God, whose value was enhanced by the service of God in a busy helpfulness of men. One preached the virtual extinction of life as the only salvation worth seeking; the other opened the glory of the endless, heavenly life, as the crown of man's salvation. Such is the unescapable difference when the portrait of

Gautama in the Piṭakas is placed beside the portrait of Christ in the Gospels.

III. Doctrine of God.—I. Gautama Denied a Supreme Being.—The doctrinal system of Guatama presents many things which are unique. There is no recognition of a personal, Supreme Being; Buddhism is unquestionably at least passively atheistic. Once when Buddha was asked about a Supreme Being, he declined to discuss the matter as something beyond man's cognizance, which should confine itself to the absorbing needs of this present evil world. In conversation with Ālāra, a wise Brāhman, who asserted that the Great Brahmā was a Supreme God, Gautama declared that at the destruction of this universe at the end of a Kalpa, such a Being could not exist; and that had all things been created by such a Being, there could have been no possibility of evil and suffering, for all things must have been good. Further discussion was declined as a profitless inquiry. Guatama had no place in his system for a Supreme God. His teaching began and ended with man. Man himself worked out his destiny by his own power.

2. Substitutes for Deity.—Yet man's need of an object of reverence and worship and his tendency to seek external, supernatural aid, led to the elevation of Gautama into a kind of semi-deification as an object of worship. The divine attributes of infinite power, wisdom, and omniscience were attributed to him during his Buddhahood. Since he no longer exists, he is represented by countless images wrought in wood, in marble, and in precious metals before which his followers bow in adoration. This semi-deification also shows itself in the acceptance of Buddha's teaching as



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3. *Substitutes for True Prayer.*—Naturally there is no place for prayer in Buddhism. There is no living God to whom man's aspirations can rise and from whom divine assistance can be asked. The operation of material laws is inexorable and is presided over by no Supreme Being. Yet men crave some form for the expression of the soul's desires. To meet this craving, prayer formulae, expressions of wishes rather than prayers, have been composed and are heard at every Buddhist shrine. Though there is no person to answer, it is fondly hoped that there is some subtle law that may be effective in its operation and produce the desired result. Many times the question has been put to worshippers on the spacious platform of the great Shwe Dagon pagoda, "Are you praying to Gautama, or to the pagoda?" The answer always is, "I am praying to no one." "Then what are you praying for?" "For nothing," the reply comes; "but I hope in some way, I know not how, to get benefit."

IV. Buddhism's Doctrine of the World.—I. *No Creator.*—As there is no Supreme God, so there is no idea of an omnipotent Creator. The Buddhist Scriptures have nothing like the sublime sentence which opens the Hebrew Scriptures, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Sir M. Monier-Williams says concisely: "Buddhism has no Creator, creation, no original germ of things, no soul of the world, no personal, no impersonal, no supra-mundane, no antemundane principle." Gautama refused to discuss the eternity of the existing universe. When Malunka asked Buddha whether the existence of the world is eternal or not eternal, he made no reply because he thought that the inquiry tended to no profit.

His method is illustrated in questions addressed to him in Vacchagotta's Fire Sutta, "Do you hold the view that the world is eternal?" "No." "That the world is not eternal?" "No." "That it has an end?" "No." "That it has not an end?" "No."

2. *Buddhist Cosmology*.—Yet Buddhism has its cosmology. As Rhys Davids says, "Buddhism takes as its ultimate fact the existence of the material world and of conscious beings living in it." A universe comes from nothing and will resolve itself into nothing. Previous universes, each with its myriad cycles of years, have ended in a great cataclysm of destruction. This universe, with its central mountain, Meru, and its strange concentric seas, its ten thousand worlds with their attendant heavens, continents of earth, hells, and ruling deities, after immense cycles of time will disappear in a complete dissolution. A new universe will succeed it, not made from its materials, which will have ceased to exist, but rising from nothing, under the compelling force of Karma, that mysterious potent energy, accumulated in the existence of the preceding universe which brings an entirely new universe into existence.

V. Doctrine of Man.—1. *Man Soulless; Skandhas, Karma*.—The teaching of Buddhism in regard to man is perfectly consistent with its doctrine of the world. As there is no Divine Self, or Supreme Presiding Spirit in the universe, so there is no soul (Ātmā) in man. It is his awful ignorance (Avijjā) which makes a man think, "I am." This idea is regarded as one of the worst forms of heresy and occupies the first place in the Three Great Delusions. It also has its place among the four Upādānas, which

are the cause of birth and all the evils of existence resulting from it. Instead of a permanent, individual self, Gautama declared that all sentient beings were a combination or assemblage of certain constituent elements or faculties which do not constitute a soul or self. The elements are called Skandhas, and cease to exist with death. They combine at each birth, dissolve at each death. In re-birth there is the appearance of fresh Skandhas. The five Skandhas are: 1. Rūpa, "form;" 2. Vedanā, "sensation," arising from the contact of the five senses and the mind with external objects; 3. Saññā, "perception," or ideas springing from the six kinds of sensation; 4. Śaṅkā, "mental properties," or tendencies of sentient beings; 5. Viññāna, the "thought faculty," combining consciousness and thinking. The last is the nearest to our idea of soul that exists in the Piṭakas; but like the other Skandhas, it ceases to exist when the body dies. Though the Skandhas dissolve at death, Karma, the potent energy which is the resultant of the merits and demerits of the person deceased, brings into existence a new set of Skandhas in a new being. Thus there is theoretically no continuity of personal identity, no re-birth of the same soul. It must be stated, however, that many of the uneducated common people do not understand this doctrine of the sacred books; and hence they fear the future, believing that they themselves will be reborn. Occasionally there is a person who professes to remember events in his preceding existence.

2. *Buddhism's View of the Body.*—In Buddhism the body is regarded with loathing as a mass of corruption, the abode of evil, the prison-house of man. The

Dhammapada says: "Look at this dressed up lump, covered with wounds, joined together, sickly, full of many thoughts, which has no strength, no hold. This body is wasted, full of sickness and frail; this heap of corruption breaks to pieces, life ends in death." The novice, when invested with the yellow robe, enumerates the thirty-two impurities of the body. The worthlessness of the body is detailed with sickening minuteness in the Vijāyasutta. It is considered a hindrance to advancement in the path of sanctification, and must be sternly repressed. In the Sucilomasutta, Buddha says: "Passion and hatred have their origin from the body; disgust, delight, and horror arise from the body; arising from the body, doubts vex the mind, as boys vex a crow." The action of each sense must be watched and unflinchingly crushed.

3. *The Consequent Ascetic Life.*—This principle of the evil character of the body and the exercise of the senses underlies the establishment of a monastic community in the Saṅgha. An ascetic life, with its complete separation from the world, is the only path for a sure advance in that virtue which insures Nirvāṇa. The Dhammapada says: "A wise man should leave the dark state [of ordinary life] and follow the bright state [of the monk]. After going from his home to a homeless state, he should, in his retirement, look for enjoyment where there seemed to be no enjoyment. Leaving all pleasures behind and calling nothing his own, the wise man should purge himself from all the troubles of the mind." So important is the repression of the body that the Vinaya gives minute directions in regard to the minimum of what is necessary in dwelling, dress, food, and condiments. The only road

to Nirvāṇa leads through monkhood, for the monk is the only man in a position to shun the world and to seek self-conquest with the least hindrance.

VI. Doctrine of Sin.—**I. *What Sin Is.***—The Buddhist conception of sin is of a thought or act which causes suffering and demerit. There is no true idea of sin as an offense against a Supreme Being by the transgression of His holy will. So Buddhist morality knows nothing of motive based on the love or fear of god. The opposite of the wicked thought or act which brings suffering and demerit is the good thought or act which emancipates from suffering and obtains merit. Every exhortation to good deeds and purity of thought lies along the plane of self-interest. It is because this is forgotten that men who look at Buddhist ethics superficially find so much seemingly in common between Buddhism and Christianity and fail to note the radically different bases on which the two systems of ethics are founded.

2. *The Ten Fetters.*—All forms of existence are under the sway of Kilesa, depravity, and its accompanying evil of demerit. There are several classifications of the evil tendencies which unite or bind one to the round of existences. The Ten Fetters furnish an illustration. They are: 1. The heresy of individuality, that is, the delusion of believing in a personal self; 2. doubt, that is, of the truth of Buddha's doctrine; 3. dependence on ritual practices; 4. lust, bodily passions; 5. anger, ill feeling; 6. desire for life [in this or higher worlds]; 7. desire for life in immaterial form [in the highest heavens]; 8. pride; 9. exalted judgment of self; 10. ignorance. Chained by such powerful evil principles one has no prospect of

any immediate deliverance from their control. Such a deliverance could not be expected until the ocean of existences had been crossed innumerable times; while beyond these existences, like an ignis fatuus, flickers the illusory light of Nirvāṇa.

3. *The Four Noble Truths.*—In his sermon in the Deer Park at Benares Guatama gives the fundamental principles of his system, which involve his doctrine of sin as an act which causes suffering. He states that the Four Noble Truths are: 1. Suffering, the fact that existence in this or any other world inevitably involves pain and sorrow; 2. The cause of suffering, the fact that lust (Rāga), or desire (Taṇhā), is seen in the thirst or craving for sensual pleasures, for worldly prosperity, and for existence; 3. The cessation of suffering, the fact that suffering disappears with the conquest and extinction of lust and desire in all their forms; 4. The path leading to the cessation of suffering, perseverance in this path producing a virtuous life, whose consummation is the destruction of all causes of suffering. Thus suffering ceases because the evil principles whose obedience in sinful acts produces it, are overcome by crushing them out of a man's life. The Dhammapada says: "There is no suffering for him who has finished his journey and abandoned grief, who has freed himself on all sides and thrown off all fetters." Suffering as the principle of all life is thus explained: "Birth is suffering (being an action of an evil Karma, caused by an evil pre-existence), decay is suffering; clinging to the five constituent parts of existence is suffering: perfect cessation of thirst and desires is the cessation of suffering. This is the Noble Truth of Suffering."

Back of all this are the thoughts and acts of life deemed sinful and productive of suffering because they bind to this life and keep men from the Middle Path by which they can reach the final emancipation and be free from suffering.

4. *The Eightfold Path.*—“The Middle Path,” so called because it avoids the indulgence in the pleasures of sense on the one hand and self-mortification and torture on the other hand, is eightfold in nature. It is the only true way to advance in a virtuous life towards the goal of Nirvāṇa. It consists of: 1. Right belief or views; 2. right feelings or aims; 3. right speech; 4. right action; 5. right livelihood; 6. right endeavor, or training; 7. right memory, or mindfulness; 8. right meditation, or concentration of mind. It must be remembered that these expressions do not possess the broad ethical sense applicable to the daily life of ordinary man. They belong only to the solitary life of a Buddhist monk, and must be interpreted in a narrow sense in connection with the frames of mind and modes of action expected in one who has cut himself off from the society of his fellows and has retired into the seclusion of the monastic life. Society with one's fellows is so conducive to sinful thought and action that it is hardly possible for any one to enter the Eightfold Path unless he becomes a monk.

5. *Ignorance.*—Among the evil principles, yielding to which is productive of sin, demerit, and suffering, none occupy so prominent a place as ignorance (*Avijjā*), thirst or desire (*Taṇhā*), and clinging to existence (*Upādāna*). Ignorance consists in not knowing that all life is suffering, and that suffering is the



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down deep roots, so that when the tiller thinks that he has rooted it up, it suddenly springs up again with a rapid growth. “Whomsoever this fierce thirst overcomes, full of poison in this world, his sufferings increase like the abounding Birana grass.” “This salutary word I tell you; do ye, as many as are assembled, dig up the root of thirst, as he who wants the sweet scented Usīra root must dig up the Birana grass, that Māra [the tempter] may not crush you again and again, as the stream crushes the reeds.”

7. *Clinging to Existence*.—Taṇhā is not only the desire for sensuous pleasures, the craving of the senses, but it is also Upādāna, the clinging to existence. Far below the sensuous desires at the root of being are innate longings for existence, often held unconsciously. The explanation is this. The Second Noble Truth declares that all desire leads to existence. It perpetuates birth after birth. If there was no contact of the senses with external things, there would be no grasping after external things, and so there would be no desire for personal existence in this or other worlds; and one basis of sin, one source of sorrow would cease. “I see in this world this trembling race given to desire for existences. “He is a wise and accomplished man in this world; having abandoned this cleaving to reiterated existence he is without desire, free from woe, free from longing; he has crossed over birth and old age.” The man who has conquered Ignorance, Desire, and Clinging to Existence can say: “I have conquered all, I know all, in all conditions of life I am free from taint; I have left all, and through the destruction of thirst, I am free; having learnt myself, whom shall I teach?” Sin is thus in the

Buddhist sense, the thought or act which produces suffering; it has no reference to the breaking of the law of a supremely Holy Being.

VII. The Doctrine of Karma.—I. *What Transmigration Explains.*—Ignorance with its outcome of sin entails, as we have seen, a series of numberless successive lives in some form until by the acquirement of the Four Noble Truths the Deliverance of Nirvāṇa is reached. The doctrine of transmigration is the theory which attempts the solution of the problem of evil. Present evil existence is the result of evil in a preceding existence. Future existence will be full of happiness or sorrow according to the character of this present life. Here is the explanation of the anomalies, wrongs, and evils, as well as the happiness, prosperity, and blessings so unequally distributed among men. But at last, with ignorance dispelled, the mind becomes “knowledge-freed” and grasps the principle that suffering is the inevitable attribute of all existence. The impossibility of escape is thus graphically described: “Not in the sky, not in the midst of the sea, not if we enter into the clefts of the mountains, is there known a spot in the whole world where a man might be freed from an evil deed.”

2. *Karma Defined.*—The great cause of transmigration is Karma. Karma primarily means act, but as a Buddhist term it means act-force. Rhys Davids calls it “the conservation of moral energy.” The idea is that when a sentient being dies Karma, the resultant force of all his past actions, brings into existence a new being whose state is happy or miserable according to the desert, good or evil, embodied in that resultant force. In an interview with Gautama, a young

Brāhman said: "From some cause or other mankind receive existence; but there are some persons who are exalted, others are mean; some who die young, others who live to a great age; some who suffer from various diseases, others who have no sickness until they die; some who are of mean birth, others who belong to the highest castes. What is the cause of these differences? What is it that appoints or controls these discrepancies?" To which Buddha replied: "All sentient beings have their own individual Karma; the most essential property of all beings is their Karma; Karma comes by inheritance, not from parentage, but from previous births; Karma is the cause of all good and evil. It is the difference in Karma that causes the difference in the lot of man, so that some are mean and others are exalted, some are miserable and others are happy." Thus there is no law of heredity in Buddhism, but in figure all action of a sentient being may be looked upon as seed sown from which a partial fruitage is reaped in the world, but much of the seed, made up of good or bad elements, has remained to spring forth after his death and bear fruit in the existence of a new being whose character, condition, and place of living are determined by it. The being who dies is not reborn. Another person is born, bearing the results, good or evil, of the life of the being who died. The Skandhas of one being dissolve and new Skandhas appear in the new being determined by the Karma of the former being. In other words, there is no continuity of identity. Here is a difficulty, for one would naturally expect that every moral idea would demand the continuity of personal identity, when such a moral act-force was to de-

termine the character of another existence. But there is no soul in the Buddhist system, and there is no actual identity of any kind between the two sentient beings that the action of Karma connects, except perhaps the relation which the seed has between the plant which produced it and the plant which it produces. Yet sometimes Gautama seems to imply a very intimate connection between the two beings joined by Karma. The Dhammapada says: "The virtuous man delights in this world, and he delights in the next; he delights in both. The evil doer suffers in this world, and he suffers in the next; he suffers in both." The sacred books, however, clearly teach non-identity in the absence of a soul in man.

VIII. Salvation.—I. Buddhist Idea of Salvation and Sin.—In Buddhism salvation means an escape from existence which is regarded as inherently and only evil and full of suffering. There is no place for the forgiveness of sins; for there is no God of infinite power and love, no all-powerful Savior like Christ to redeem from the power of sin and death and to restore to a life of everlasting harmony with God. Sins arise out of the evil condition belonging to the body, and their punishment follows with unerring certainty. "All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our own thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage." Inexorable law occupies the place of God in Gautama's system and rules the lives and destinies of men. Forgiveness is an impossibility, for there is no one who can forgive. Retribution in

oneself is set forth in ghastly pictures of torments in hells, which have only a partial and temporary part in the punishment of evil deeds, successive rebirths for ages being necessary to complete the expiation.

2. *Salvation an Intellectual Act.*—Salvation is a purely intellectual attainment, as is indicated by the derivation of the name Buddha from *budh*, to know. Gautama reached salvation by attaining the Great Enlightenment, a mental, not a spiritual condition. It is by a perfect mental apprehension of the Four Noble Truths that a man reaches emancipation and passes beyond the ocean of Saṃsāra (transmigration) and the unconscious calm or non-existence of Nirvāṇa. “He who takes refuge in Buddha, the Law, and the Saṅgha, he who with clear understanding sees the Four Noble Truths, namely, suffering, the origin of suffering, the destruction of suffering, and the Eight-fold Path that leads to the quieting of suffering—that is the safe refuge, that is the best refuge; having gone to that refuge, a man is delivered from all pain.”

3. *Salvation Self-wrought.*—In Buddhism salvation is a self-wrought thing. “By oneself the evil is done, by oneself one suffers; by oneself evil is left undone, by oneself one is purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself; no one can purify another.” “Those who are ever watchful, who study day and night, and who strive after Nirvāṇa, their passions will come to an end.” “Self is lord of self; who else could be lord? With self well subdued, a man finds a lord such as few can find.” In the event of Gautama’s attainment of Buddhahood under the Bo Tree he claimed to have arrived unaided at perfect insight into the nature and

cause of sorrow and the method by which it might be destroyed. Man is his own savior.

4. *Underlying Principle of Salvation.*—One great principle is laid down for the working out of salvation. A man abandoning home from homelessness must enter the solitary life of a monk and, pursuing only “right action,” must abandon himself to intense self-concentration and profound abstract meditation until the Great Enlightenment breaks upon him. While he keeps the Ten Precepts which pertain to external things, he must strenuously tread the Eightfold Path. The Dhammapada says: “The best of ways is the eightfold; the best of truths, the four words; the best of virtues, passionlessness; the best of men, he who has eyes to see. This is the way — there is no other — that leads to the purifying of intelligence.”

5. *Stages of Sanctification.*—The steps of the Eightfold Path have been already mentioned, but the eighth step is more complex than the others and needs some explanation. It has several stages. The first stage is complete emancipation from the first three fetters — delusion of self, doubt about Buddha and his doctrines, and belief in the efficacy of external rites. A man who has gained this stage of sanctification is called a Sotāpanno, “one who has entered the stream.” This stream will carry him along to the tranquil sea of Nirvāṇa, whatever existences may remain to him. He cannot be reborn in the lower worlds but only in the world of man, or in one of the higher worlds. In the first stage of Jhāna by which this first stage of sanctification is reached, a man secludes himself and, full of the spirit of reflection, fixes his thinking faculties on some particular object until

a state of ecstatic joy and serenity are produced. The second state of sanctification is such an emancipation from the power of sensuality and hatred that the person will be reborn in this world only once more. He is called a *Sakadāgāmī*, “one returning once [to this world].” In the second stage of *Jhāna* by which this second stage of sanctification is attained, a man has such a profound concentration of mind that the action of the thinking faculties cease and only ecstatic joy and serenity remain. The third stage of sanctification is entire emancipation from the first five fetters, not a trace of low desire for self or toward others remaining. He is called *Anāgāmī*, “one who will not return [to this world].” In the third stage of *Jhāna* by which this end is reached, only perfect serenity remains and only one existence in a *Rūpa-brahmā* world lies before him. The fourth stage of sanctification is complete emancipation, *Arhatship*, in which the mind, purified, exalted, is without any emotion of pain or pleasure. The ten fetters are completely broken. No bond attaches the man to existence any longer. Freed from the power of *Karma*, he would experience no re-birth after death. He is an *Arhat*, or “worthy one.” In the fourth stage of *Jhāna* by which *Arhatship* is reached, serenity ceases to exist. The *Arhat* becomes completely indifferent to all things good or evil and dwells in a rapt, trance-like ecstasy. These are the processes by which a man, through ages of re-birth, slowly drops off the evils and impurities of existence, becomes more and more freed from all illusion about its phenomena, advances in moral holiness, reaches at last a complete disentanglement of the web of *Karma*, enters upon a state of



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the mind is destroyed; it has attained the extinction of desires." This was Nirvāṇa in its first sense. Ignorance, depravity, desire, clinging to existence had been destroyed and the action of Karma brought to an end. But Gautama lived for many years in the Nirvāṇa. The Skandhanirvāṇa, the destruction of the elements of physical being, could come only at his death.

2. *Parinirvāṇa*.—In the case of Gautama this final and complete Nirvāṇa is called Parinirvāṇa; and, notwithstanding those who, under the influence of Western feeling which shrinks from the idea of annihilation, seek to define it as a calm, passionless, unconscious existence, it means extinction of all existence. The metaphysical distinction between the two ideas is so tenuous as to amount to nothing. The Brahmajalasutta gives the idea of extinction. "When the stalk to which a bunch of mangoes is united is cut off, all the mangoes united to that stalk accompany it; even so, monks, the body of Tathāgata, whose stalk of existence is entirely cut off, still remains; and so long as the body remains, he will be seen by gods and men; but upon the termination of life, when the body is broken up, gods and men shall not see him."

X. Buddhist Ethics.—The ethical teaching of Buddhism is lofty and noble. By some it has been ranked not only next to, but above that of Christianity among the great religions of the world. There are, indeed, many real similarities, but there are also many which are only superficial. Radically different fundamental principles underlie the two systems of teaching which it will be necessary to refer to later.

1. *Object of Ethics*. — The moral tone of the Buddhist precepts is intensely earnest. The object is not

simply external morality, but an inward morality of the mind. To follow the precepts outwardly is not enough. There must be the sincere desire of the mind to embody the precepts in daily life. Without inward sincerity as a possession, even a monk is one only in name.

2. *Requirements Differ for Monks and Laity.*—

While the moral precepts are deemed applicable to all Buddhists, yet only the members of the celibate Saṅgha, by following the special rules of monastic life together with the moral precepts, could possibly attain the highest good, Nirvāṇa. In view of the necessary conditions of ordinary life of those who could not enter the Saṅgha, Gautama established a secondary way for the laity, or householders (*gahapati*), as they were styled, and in a certain degree associated them with his Saṅgha as a recognized religious class of men. Such might, through the observance of the precepts, attain a heavenly state (*Sugati*), but could never escape from the grip of Karma and existence. To reach the end of sorrow in Nirvāṇa, the householder must enter the mendicant ranks. The *Khaggavisāṇasutta* says of the householder, “Removing the characteristics of a householder like a *Parikhatta* tree whose leaves are cut off, clothed in a yellow robe after wandering away [from his house] let him wander alone like a rhinoceros.”

3. *Five Precepts.*—Perhaps none of the rules of moral conduct are more prominent in the Buddhist system and more frequently on the lips of its followers, than the five fundamental rules, called the *Pañcasīla*. They are:

- (1) One should not take life.

- (2) One should not steal.
- (3) One should not commit adultery.
- (4) One should not lie.
- (5) One should not drink intoxicating liquor.

These Five Precepts are binding on all Buddhists, and are a part of the Ten Precepts binding on all monks. The five additional precepts for monks concern external practice and have no moral element in them except the cultivation of humility and soberness of life. The third of the Five Precepts needs farther explanation. Entire abstinence from sexual intercourse was obligatory on the monk. Without this abstinence no one could enter upon the direct path to Arhatship and Nirvāṇa. "A wise man should avoid married life as if it were a pit of burning coals." The Munisutta says: "From acquaintanceship arises fear, from household life arises defilement; the houseless state, freedom from acquaintanceship, this is indeed the view of the Muni." The idea that marriage or a happy home life was evil was a direct antagonism to human nature. A recoil naturally arose from the universal application of this doctrine of celibacy. As Gautama won a large number of disciples, the people complained, "Gautama is breaking up family life." They saw that the perpetuation of the race would give place to childlessness and the extinction of the family. Gautama found a relaxation of his rule a necessity. Marriage was allowed to the "householder," and its upright moral character was assured to him by the approval of Gautama; but the "householder," could never enter the Eightfold Path, the Path of Salvation, unless he adopted the celibacy of a monk. It is a curious case of yielding apparently to the popular will,

while Gautama still maintained that desire in any form was one of the great evils of human existence.

4. *Miscellaneous Precepts.*—A quotation of some of the moral precepts from different parts of the sacred books will convey a good conception of their character.

Anger.—“He who holds back rising anger like a rolling chariot, him I call a real driver; other people are but holding the reins.” “Him I call indeed a Brāhmana who is tolerant with the intolerant, mild with faultfinders, and free from passion among the passionate. Him I call indeed a Brāhmana from whom anger and hatred, pride and envy have dropped like a mustard seed from the point of a needle.”

Hatred.—“For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time. Hatred ceases by love; this is an old rule.”

Pride.—“The person who, without being asked, praises his own virtue and [holy] works to others, him the good call ignoble, one who praises himself.”

Hypocrisy.—“Many men whose shoulders are covered with the yellow robe are ill-conditioned and unrestrained; such evil doers by their evil deeds go to hell.” “What is the use of platted hair, O fools [referring to the Hindu ascetics]! What of the raiment of goat-skins! Within thee there is ravening, but the outside, thou makest clean.”

Love of Evil Company.—“He who walks in the company of fools suffers a long way. Company with fools, as with an enemy, is always painful; company with the wise is pleasure, like meeting with kinsfolk.”

Love of Riches.—“‘These sons belong to me.’ With such, a fool is tormented. He himself does not belong to himself; how much less sons and wealth.”

The Ten Perfections.—The Perfections are an un-

scientifically arranged set of transcendent virtues, the perfect exercise of which belongs only to those who are in the path of Arhatship and are a preliminary condition to the attainment of Nirvāṇa. Underlying them are fundamental virtuous principles which are recognized and inculcated as a desirable attainment by all.

Love, or Loving-kindness, (Mettā) is much dwelt upon. It is an attitude of kindly compassionate feeling, and is not necessarily a motive of action. It seeks concord with others. “Let us cultivate goodwill toward all the world, a boundless [friendly] mind, above and below and across, unobstructed, without hatred, without enmity.” It also abstains from doing injury to others,—“Whosoever in this world harms living beings, whether once or twice born, and in whom there is no compassion for living beings, let one know him as an outcast.” The conception is a narrow one compared with the outgoing force of Christian love.

Self-control.—“As rain does not break through a well-thatched house, passion will not break through a well reflecting mind.” “If one man conquer in battle a thousand times thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greatest of conquerors.”

Forbearance.—“Silently shall I endure abuse as the elephant in battle endures the arrow sent from the bow, for the world is ill-natured.”

Recognition of Equality.—“I do not call a man a Brāhmana because of his origin or of his mother. He is indeed arrogant and he is wealthy; but the poor who is free from all attachments, him I call indeed a Brāhmana.”

Filial Love.—“The gift of the whole world with

all its wealth would be no adequate return to parents for all that they have done.”

Reverence for Age.—“He who always greets and constantly reveres the aged, four things will increase to him, viz., life, beauty, happiness, power.”

Liberality is enforced, but it is not a generous giving to others. The word *danām*, gift, is used generally in the special Buddhist sense of giving to the monks. The object of this giving is not philanthropic, but for the simple purpose of securing the merit which follows as a reward. The result is, that while the devout Buddhist will build *zayats*, or rest houses, dig wells, and do other things of more or less public utility, these things are not primarily for the good of others, but for the attainment of personal merit.

5. *The Basis of Buddhist and of Christian Ethics.*—These quotations show that the Buddhist ethical system has much that is very beautiful and noble, and that it furnishes a high ideal of personal kindness, moral earnestness, and purity. Examination of the basis on which the system rests and the object which it seeks shows at once that there is a radical difference of basis from that on which the Christian system rests. The foundation of Buddhist morality, as well as its end, is self-interest. It seeks to direct self-repression for the express benefit of self; and that benefit, when it culminates, is the release of self from existence and the extinction of self in *Nirvāṇa*. It starts with the assumption that all existence is evil through suffering and impermanence, and it uses its principles as a means by which the personal individuality of a man may be utterly destroyed by himself. The basis of Christian ethics is an unselfishness by which life is purified and

made a beautiful ministry to others as a service of God. As Buddhist ethics center in self in their application, they are naturally comparatively passive in form; while Christian ethics, without stopping at the benefit of self, flow out in strenuous influence to make man an ardent lover of his fellow and a reverent servant of God.

XI. Outward Religious Forms.—I. *Pagodas and Worship Days.*—Buddhist piety covers the land with pagodas, in which sacred relics are supposed to be enshrined, and with monasteries for the residence of the monks. The desire to obtain merit is the moving principle in the building of these shrines and retreats for monastic life. Whenever it is possible, the pagoda occupies the summit of a hill or some other slightly place and gives picturesqueness to the view. On worship days, and especially at great feasts, the people visit the pagodas and monasteries with their offerings and recite their religious formulae, sure of increasing their stock of merit. There are four worship days in each lunar month, the crescent, the full moon, the eighth day of the waning, and the change, or “dark-moon.” Devout Buddhists observe the four days. They are careful to visit the pagodas, and, after having worshipped, they spend the day in neighboring *zayats* or resthouses built near by, where they repeat their rosaries, talk of the Law or of the topics of the day, and, if opportunity offers, gather about monks, who recite passages from the sacred books. Though there is no power but public opinion to condemn absence, the worldly minded do not miss very many of these appointed days, because of the opportunities for gay social intercourse and the outside amusements which are furnished for the occasion.



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candles or bright colored flowers, kneel on the bare flagging, while endless streams of people, eager to see and to talk, move to and fro. The blending of worship and festivity seems in no way to jar on the public sense. Popular worship is the same on all worship days and at all great festivals of the year.

3. *Home Worship of Spirits.*—Private worship in the home does not exist very generally. Some earnest men read the sacred books, or tell the 108 beads of their rosary in the wearisome repetition, Aneiksa, doka, anatta — “Impermanence, suffering, unreality.” The worship of the pagoda is only thought of once in seven days; in the home there is constant recognition of the presence of the spirits who have an intimate connection with men from birth to death. These spirits must be propitiated lest they act with malevolence. When a house is built, the tops of the posts are covered with white hoods of cotton cloth for the comfortable abode of the house nat. Sometimes a hollow cocoanut is hung from the eaves in front of the house. A small flat piece of wood, fastened at the end of a short pole which is placed upright in the ground, is used for a nat altar, and a handful of cooked rice is laid upon it as an offering to the house nat. The preparation of the fields for the crops and the gathering of the harvest are preceded by offerings to the nats. Villages have their nats, for whom little shrines are erected just outside of their limits, where tiny lamps, water-pots, flowers, and morsels of food are reverently placed. While the educated monks denounce this nat worship as heretical, it continues to maintain its hold on the people and conveys a feeling of comfort and assurance to them. All this shows how imperfect the hold of

Buddhism is on the real life of the people. Still men who practice these customs would indignantly deny that they were not Buddhists.

XII. Sects of Southern Buddhism.—Buddhism is not free from sects. The divisions arise more in regard to the following of monkish discipline as taught in the Vinaya than in any broad difference of doctrine. In Burma the principal sects are two: the Mahagandi, who discard many of the strict rules of discipline, wear silk robes, use sandals in walking, cover the head from the sun with an umbrella, and even have food cooked for themselves in their monastery enclosures; and the Sulagandi sect, the Puritan party, which denounces the luxurious tendencies that have come in with the increase of wealth under the English government. These, as well as the smaller sects, are very hostile to one another, refusing common worship and attendance at funerals of those of another sect, and even avoiding daily intercourse.

XIII. Weaknesses of Buddhism.—1. *Without God.*—It is a colossal weakness of Buddhist belief that it has no supreme, eternal, perfect Being who rises above all other beings in the inherent perfection of His character, controls all things, and presents His own holy will as the unchanging rule of life. Buddha, who rises to such prominence like a meteor in the sky, is only a temporarily deified man. One of the first efforts of the Christian missionary must be to establish the doctrine of the eternal God as Creator and Moral Ruler of the world, by whose wisdom and power the universe exists. Down deep in the hearts of many of the common people is a latent, responsive feeling of the reasonableness of the existence of such a God. This

latent idea in many minds is an undoubted help to the missionary in trying to establish the fact of the being of God, for such often listen readily to arguments in favor of the doctrine. Some educated men have gone so far as to say that, as the marble or wooden image of Gautama represents him, so Gautama represents an unknown Supreme Being, but such cases are exceedingly rare.

2. *No Basis for Conscience.*—With the absence of the belief in the existence of an eternal, omnipotent God who makes obedience to His perfect moral will the law of daily life, there is no basis for conscience in its best sense and for the stimulation of its exercise. The nearest approach to conscience in the Buddhist terminology is *Ottapa*, the mental state of fearing hell. Many ignorant people might not even know the word, which is of Pāli origin; but the principle exists, for one of the most common excuses for not doing a wrong thing is, “I fear hell.” It is from the lack of a keen conscience that lying and theft are regarded as trivial matters, from which very few would abstain if they thought circumstances were favorable to themselves. Though sensuality, earthly pleasure, and clinging to the objects of sense are forbidden, and purity, gentleness, and kindness to others are inculcated, whatever of conscience may exist, its power is too weak to lead to the avoidance of the evil and the pursuit of the good. But when the idea of a holy God is accepted, conscience is developed with life and power. There comes a keen and correct discrimination of what is right and what is wrong in all thought and action as related to God’s holy will, and likewise the incentive to obedience to that will, or the sweeping condemnation of dis-

obedience with consequent results of happiness or suffering.

3. *Absence of True View of Sin.*— With the establishment of a true conscience, the true doctrine of sin finds a foundation. Sin becomes the transgression of God's will, a great pervading evil in life. No such idea of sin exists in Buddhism. There are sins, the transgression of the moral precepts as the Buddhists know them, but there is no acknowledgment of a sinful state through the separation from God which the Christian religion teaches.

4. *False Doctrine of Salvation.*— With the establishment of the existence of God, the awakening of conscience, and the recognition of man as a sinner against God through disobedience to His will, men are ready to understand the Christian doctrine of salvation. Here, as in the case of many religious terms, great care is necessary to insure a clear understanding of the meaning of the word. Otherwise a missionary and a Buddhist may talk at cross purposes. The Christian and the Buddhist ideas of salvation are opposites. The Buddhist conceives of salvation as the personal deliverance of self by the efforts and actions of self culminating after numberless existences in the attainment of Nirvāṇa. He denies absolutely that one can be in any way saved by another. Distant and almost impracticable as his self-wrought salvation seems, he rejects vigorously the possibility of a divine Savior. When Gautama is called the savior, it is simply because he has made known the path of deliverance from evil, and not because he is in any way active in the deliverance of a person. Yet at the moment that God and sin become facts to the Buddhist, he realizes the

impotence of his own attempts at working out salvation and is ready to see the infinite grace and love which provides a Redeemer who not only opens a way of salvation, but is active in effecting the deliverance of the individual soul from the power of sin and death.

5. *Doctrine of Merit.*—The doctrine of Kusala, or merit, which is so intimately interwoven with the Buddhist idea of salvation, is a source of moral weakness. It caters to man's love of self-righteousness. This doctrine exerts a very powerful influence in the life of the people and often overshadows the moral influence of the ethical system. The Dhammapada says, "He whose evil deeds are covered by good deeds brightens up this world like the moon when freed from clouds." These good deeds do not necessarily involve any moral principle. They may be mere external acts according to the law, like the offering of flowers at a pagoda, whose sole purpose is to accumulate merit by the gift. Theoretically the principle of "good-intention" should underlie the gifts, but practically it is lost sight of by a large number of people who act on the idea that the mere act of making offerings secures merit. More than this, men deliberately do evil and console themselves by making offerings whose merit will offset their demerit. They thus deliberately balance Kusala and Akusala, and the moral quality of action is completely ignored. The effect on personal life is to minimize whatever moral force exists in the popular religion. Men spend much, according to their means, in the erection of pagodas, monasteries, and rest-houses, in the support of monks and the great variety of offerings in worship, without being con-

scious of the movement of any moral feeling or of any resultant moral benefit.

6. *A Religion of the Intellect Only.*—Another point of weakness has already been alluded to in the fact that Buddhism is a religion of the intellect. Man has no soul, and there can be no appeal to spiritual development. Enlightenment of the mind by meditation, so that the mind may gain that clear and complete understanding of all things which dispels ignorance and ends the voyage across the crossing waves of the ocean of existence, was the great object sought by Gautama. Moral perfection, as a soul life, is not stimulated, though moral principles are inculcated; hence the moral forces in Buddhism are weakened and the external life takes an undue prominence. Men seek to follow the prohibitions of their religion, but the moral quality is not the determining power of the action. The Christian missionary is often tried by the intellectual assent to the truths which he preaches, because there is no corresponding heart assent which changes the life. The convert often looks at Christianity with the same mental attitude which he has hitherto held toward his ancestral religion. The lack of the need of a heart assent, as demanded by Christianity, has gone far to produce a low moral plane of popular life.

7. *Effects of Belief in Karma.*—One effect of the doctrine of Karma in the life of the common people has been to make man accept life in an almost fatalistic sense. The events, the joys, and the sorrows of every day are not regarded as altogether the result of one's individual action. They are often attributed to the force of Karma acting upon them. The man who meets with trouble soothes himself with the remark,

“ My Karma is evil.” The man who has prosperity rejoices in the idea that his Karma is good. The feeling of responsibility for action with reference to its results and the consequent stimulant to high attainments are impaired. The popular mind often manifests a subtle indifference to misfortune and to success, whose secret is the idea that much in life is due to the overshadowing influence of Karma. Casual travelers have said that the Burmans are a very cheerful race. This is true in outward appearance at least; but, after all, it is not always due to a happy frame of mind, but rather to the acceptance of things as they come, as matters of course which nothing could hinder. Lamentation over past evil is useless, and enjoyment should be extracted from the present moment, so far as possible.

XIV. Benefits Conferred by Buddhism.—I. Civic and Social.—Buddhism has conferred benefits on the peoples who have come under its influence. It proclaims the equality of civil rights and social freedom. Men of the poorest families may rise to the highest positions. Caste is foreign to its spirit, and through its absence daily intercourse is easy and unrestricted. Women are accorded full independence of action. Untrammelled by any repression, they take an active and prominent part in all forms of the business of daily life.

2. *Education, Literature, and Art.*—These have been fostered under its influences, especially in the earlier centuries of its history. Great schools of Buddhist learning existed in India and Ceylon, and a large and varied literature was produced. Education has been perpetuated through the monastic schools



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be foolish. The citadel must be taken by the slow approaches of a siege. The fundamental doctrines of Buddhism are so opposite to those of Christianity, that one after another the truths of Christianity must be patiently established before a full and final acceptance of the Christian religion can be brought about. Wisdom is required in finding the opportunity and in selecting the special truth that may be most suitable for the time and occasion. Local circumstances often decide these things. A courteous and candid spirit should always be maintained even in most trying conditions. The Buddhist respects the man who has self-control, as it is one of the strong points of his moral system. The great points of difference, God, the world, the nature of man, sin, the possibility of salvation, future existence, are liable to produce much friction of feeling, if not strong antagonism in thought and action. The great points of opposition cannot be avoided, but they can be often gradually approached through the use of the ethical system. Every true missionary will candidly acknowledge the excellence of the moral precepts and use them and any other form of truth in the Buddhist faith. They form a common basis of opinion whose acknowledgement pleases the Buddhist and predisposes him to give a more favorable hearing to doctrines which are not only strange and have no place in his religious system, but are fundamentally hostile to that system.

2. *Meeting Objections.*—Objections urged against Christianity should be frankly discussed. There are many natural objections which inevitably arise, connected with the nature of God, the origin of evil, the possibility of salvation, the virgin birth of Christ, and

the right to take animal life even for food. Unfortunately among the Buddhists who have come under the influence of Western education, books like those of Haeckel have strengthened natural objections in many minds. While discussions cannot be always avoided, the simple presentation of the truth and its wonderful adaptability to our highest wants is generally the most effective way of reaching the heart. A good knowledge of the Buddhist sacred books is a powerful aid. Not only does familiarity with these books insure respect and attention, but sometimes statements from them can be used with great force and effect on the side of truth.

3. *Preaching and Private Conversations.*—Public preaching in chapel or by the wayside is a very important means of evangelization, but successive private visits with those who seem ready to listen thoughtfully are of equal importance. Much of the former is like the seed sown by the wayside, while repeated visits give opportunity to nurse the fruitful seed when it springs up. I was once very much impressed by the remark of a scholarly native who assisted me in the translation of the Scriptures and after a year's service was baptized. When I said that I could not understand how so few of his people became Christians, he replied that he had heard much preaching in the bazaar before he came to me, but it was fragmentary and he did not understand. When he began to work on the New Testament day by day, however, the truth grew in his mind until he was ready to receive it as the message of God to man.