

B U D D H I S M :

ITS ORIGIN; HISTORY; AND DOCTRINES:

ITS SCRIPTURES;

AND

THEIR LANGUAGE, THE PALI.

BEING TWO LECTURES DELIVERED AT COLOMBO,

BY

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“BREVIS ESSE LABORO, OBSCURUS FIO.”

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LECTURE FIRST.

DELIVERED IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,

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BUDDHISM; ITS ORIGIN; HISTORY; AND DOCTRINES.

THE topic of my discourse this evening is, as you are aware, *Buddhism*. It is a subject of great and peculiar interest. It is invested with interest not only because Gôtama effected a change of Brahman institutions on Brahman soil—not only on account of the tendency which his doctrines had to upset the social polity of all eastern nations, the system of castes,—but also for the most wonderful results which Buddhism has effected in the greater part of Asia. Perhaps there is not—certainly, there was not, in the whole world a religion of human invention, which deserves greater examination than Buddhism. It began in the very dawn of history. Its history commenced with the very commencement of what may be called *Chronology*. Its era divided the history of the East into two parts, just as the Christian era served to divide the history of the world.¹ Nor is this all the interest which attaches to the subject. Buddhism has more than any other religion spread amongst men. It is the religion which, having been banished from its native land so entirely, that it is almost unknown there, has at the present day, upwards of 2449 years after its first promulgation, a larger number of

¹ Prof. Max Müller's Sanscrit Lit. p. 35.

followers than any other religion on the face of the whole earth, and amounting to nearly one-third of the human race.¹ It is also a remarkable fact as stated by Mr. Hardy that "there is no country in either Europe or Asia besides those that are Buddhist in which the same religion is now professed that was there extant at the time of the Redeemer's death."²

There is a still higher interest connected with the subject, when we regard Buddhism as the religion which has forged the fetters in which Brahmanism has been bound; which has humanized a great portion of mankind in the East; and which has established its civilizing influence in the greater part of Western Asia, and in our own Island. This last was the result of the mildness of the doctrines which Buddhism inculcates; and it will be noticed that they prescribe a code of morality, superior to every system with which we are acquainted, except that of Christianity.

I shall briefly consider it here in three different points of view:—*First*, as to its origin; *Secondly*, its doctrines; and *Thirdly*, its prospects.

More than five centuries before the manifestation of our Saviour in this world, in an 'age remarkable for the first diffusion and potent influence of distinct religious brotherhood, mystic rites, and expiatory ceremonies'³ in the West; when the doctrine of 'an infinity of worlds' was taught by an Anaximander and a Xenophanes;—when Brahmanism had been 'reduced from the worship of nature to theism, and had declined into scepticism with the learned, and men-worship with the vulgar,'⁴ and was through the neglect of its professors fast dwindling into decay;⁵—and, at a time too, when the Hindoos were marked with the barbarity of human sacrifice, various persons in Asia founded religious

¹ Sir E. Tennent's Christianity, p. 199. Also M. Troyer's Râjatarangiri, 399; Hardy's East. Mon. p. v.

² Hardy's East. Mon. p. 327.

³ Grote's Greece.

⁴ Hist. of India, vol. 1, B. 2, c. iv.

⁵ Buddhavansa.

associations proclaiming different doctrines for the salvation of man. Some were *Digambaras*; and the morality of the times suffered them to go about naked. Others were *Sretambaras* or those who put on 'white garments.' Some were fire-worshippers, and others adorers of the sun. Some belonged to the *Sanyâsi*, and others to the *Panchatâpa* sects. Some worshipped *Padarânga*; some *Jivaka*: and others *Nigantha*.¹ The *Jainas*, who followed the *Lôkâyata*, or the system of atheistical philosophy taught by Chârvâka, also appear to have flourished at this time.² In addition to these Gôtama himself enumerates 62 sects of religious Philosophers.

My limited time, however, does not permit me to dwell upon the different doctrines of these sects.³ Suffice it to say that about the sixth century before the Christian era, all shades of opinion and practices were tolerated:—"The broachers of new theories and the introducers of new rites did not revile the established religion, and the adherents of the old vedic system of elemental worship looked on the new notions as speculations they could not comprehend, and the new austerities as the exercise of a self-denial they could not reach, rather than as the introduction of heresy and schism." But few of these sects believed in a 'first cause;' and none acknowledged a supreme God;—therefore they differed in this respect from the Brahmans who attributed everything to the creative head of Brahmâ or Ishwara. One important point of agreement, however, between these Sectarians and the Vedic Brahmans was, that none dared to violate the Institution of Castes, which all Brahmans regarded as *sacred*. Yet amongst them there were six arch Heretics, who regarded not the distinctions which divided men into Brahmans, Kshetriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras; and for the simplest of all reasons, that they were themselves of mean extraction.

They preached to the people. They set forth their

¹ See Buddhist Annals in the Bengal As. Soc. Journ. for September, 1837.

² Aswalâyâna Suttan in the Majjima Nikâya.

³ See Ambatta Suttan.

doctrines. They at first resorted to the most legitimate means of conversion, viz. argument and discussion. But these, often, were of themselves insufficient, and availed little. Something else was required; and that was supernatural powers in those who passed for religious teachers. Well-versed however in deceit, they found no difficulty in invention, and in exhibiting supernatural powers. In proof of inspiration, to which they laid claim, they declared doctrines unintelligible to the vulgar, and above the comprehension of the common order of society. As possessing the power of *iddhi* they, like the teacher of Rasselas, often ascended an eminence to fly in the air. But, unlike the Abyssinian teacher who leaped into the water, upon the strength of his wings which sustained him in the water, the Tīrtakas resorted to other frauds, which they easily practised upon a deluded population. Thus they soon became established as *Arahantas*, at the head of distinct fraternities, having numerous congregations consisting of thousands of poor deluded human beings.

An account of them may not prove uninteresting, and the following compiled from several writers, especially from the *Saddharmālakāra*, is a brief outline of

THE HISTORY OF THE SIX TĪRTAKAS.

1. One was a half-caste—he was born in a nobleman's house, of a girl that was a foreigner. He pretended to be a Brahman; and assumed the name of the "twice born." He called himself *Kasyapa*, and received the additional appellation of *Purna*, because his birth served to "complete" the number of one hundred slaves in his master's household. For the same reason he became a favourite of his lord and enjoyed many privileges which his fellow-servants were denied. These acts of kindness, however, had a tendency to make him indolent and lazy; and the consequence was that his master soon put him to work, and appointed him his porter. This situation deprived him of the unlimited liberty

which he had previously enjoyed, and he therefore quitted the service of his master. In the helpless state in which he roamed about the country after his desertion, he was set upon by thieves, who stripped him of everything he had, including the very clothes on his person. Having, however, escaped death, he repaired in a state of perfect nudity to the neighbouring villages, where poverty led him to practise many deceptions on the credulous, until at last he established himself as an Ascetic, proclaiming his name to be *Purna Kasyapa Buddha*. *Purna*, because (he said) he was full of all arts and sciences; *Kasyapa*, 'because he was a Brahman by birth;' and *Buddha* 'because he had overcome all desires and was an Arahāt.' He was offered clothes in abundance, but declined accepting them, thinking that as a *Digambara* he would be better respected. 'Clothes,' said he, 'are for the concealment of shame; *shame* is the result of sin; and *sin* I have not, since I am a person of sanctity (a *rahāt*) who is free from evil desires.' In the then state of society, distracted by religious differences, he gained followers, and they soon exceeded eighty thousand!

"His heresy consisted," says Col. Sykes, on the authority of the Chinese Buddhistical Annals, "in annihilating all laws. He admitted neither prince nor subject, neither father nor son; neither rectitude of heart nor filial piety; and he had some mystification about *void*, *vacuum*, or *ether* being paramount."

2. *Makkhali Gōsāla* was another sectarian Teacher. He was slave in a nobleman's house, and was called *Makkhali*, after his mother; and by reason of his having been born in a *gōsāla* or 'cow-house,' he received the additional appellation *gōsāla*. One day he followed his master with a large pot of oil; and the latter perceiving his servant was on slippery, muddy ground, desired him to be on his guard. But not listening to his advice, he walked carelessly, and the result was that he stumbled upon a stump and fell down with his heavy load, breaking the pot of oil. Fearing that his master would punish him for his misconduct, Gōsāla began to run away. His master soon pursued him and seized him by his

garments, but they loosening Gòsàla effected his escape, naked. In this state he entered a city and passed for a *Digambara* Jaina, or Buddha, and founded the sect which was named after him. "He falsely believed," says Col. Sykes, in the same Essay from which I have quoted above, "that the good and evil of mankind did not result from previous actions, but were accidental. His doctrine, therefore, was that of chance."

3. *Nigantha nàtha putra* was the founder of a third Sect. He was the 'son' (*puttra*) of *Nàtha*, a husbandman; and because he boasted of an acquaintance with the entire circle of the Arts and Sciences, and moreover pretended to have destroyed the *gantha*, the 'cores' or 'knots' of *keles*, he was called *Nigantha*, or *Nirgantha*. He, too, laid claim to the high sanctity of an *Arahanta*, and preached doctrines, which were soon embraced by thousands. He held that it was sinful to drink cold water,—'Cold water,' he said, 'was imbued with a soul. Little drops of water were small souls, and large drops were large souls.' He also declared that there were three *dandas* or agents for the commission of sin, and that the acts of the body (*kàya*), of the speech (*wàk*), and of the mind (*ñana*), were three separate causes, each acting independently of the other. "His heresy consisted (says Col. Sykes) in maintaining that sins and virtues and good and evil equally resulted from destiny; and that the practice of the doctrine could not save any one from his fate."

4. A fourth was the servant of a noble family. Having run into debt, he fled from his creditors, and having no means of livelihood at the village to which he repaired, he became a practiser of austerities, after shaving his head, and putting on a 'mean garment made of hair;' from which circumstance he received the appellation of *Ajita kesakambala*. Amongst other doctrines which distinguished him from the rest of the *Titthiyas* was that by which he invested the three kingdoms of nature with a soul. He held that man and beast, and every creeping thing, and fowl of the air, as well as all trees and shrubs, had a *jivá*, or intelligent and sentient soul, endued with body, and consequently composed of parts.

'The person,' said he, 'who took away the life of a being was equally guilty with the man who ate the flesh of his dead body. One who cut down a tree, or destroyed a creeper, was as guilty as a murderer. And he who broke a branch was to be regarded as one who deprived another of his limbs.' These doctrines procured for him many followers, and they soon exceeded five thousand! Col. Sykes says, upon the authority already referred to, that this sectarian teacher "maintained that destiny could be forced, namely, that happiness could be obtained which did not result from a previous existence. The practice of this doctrine consisted in wearing coarse garments, tearing out the hair, exposing the nostrils to smoke, and the various parts of the body to fire; in short, subjecting the body to every kind of cruel penance on the conviction that sufferings on earth would ensure happiness hereafter."

5. *Sanjaya bellathi*, who had an awkward-looking head, was also a slave by birth. Obtaining his freedom from his master, he applied himself to study; and when he had become a great proficient in different branches of learning, he proclaimed himself a *Buddha*. He taught as a distinguishing feature in his doctrines, that man in an after-birth would be as he is now. 'In the transmigration of the soul,' he said, 'it assumed the identical bodily form which it had retained before death. There could be no change of person. Who-soever is now great or mean; a man or a *deva*, a biped, a quadruped, or a milleped: without feet or hands, or with deficient members of the body, will be exactly the same in the next birth.'

According to the Chinese books from which Colonel Sykes has quoted, the heresy of this person "consisted in believing that it was not necessary to search for the doctrine in the sacred book, but that it would come spontaneously when the ages of births and deaths had been passed through. He also believed that after 80,000 Kalpas the doctrine was obtained without effort."

6. *Kakudha Katyayana* was a foundling—the offspring of an illicit intercourse. His mother, who was a poor low caste

person, had no house to live in, and was delivered of him under a *Kakudha* (*Pentaptura Arjuna*, Rox.) tree, where she left him. A Brahman who picked him up, from thence adopted him as his son, and named him *Katyayana*, with the prefix of *Kakudha*, because he was found under a tree of that name. Upon the death, however, of his adopted father, *Katyayana* found himself in difficult circumstances, and resorted to different means and ways of procuring a livelihood—all of which failing, he became an Ascetic, and established himself on a large mound of earth, where he preached his austerities as a teacher of high sanctity. Like *Niganthana-putta*, *Katyayana* also declared that cold water was imbued with a soul. His heresy, according to the Chinese legends, consisted in asserting that some of the laws were appreciable by the senses, and some not.

Whilst such doctrines gained an immense number of followers; whilst the world was resounding with the noise of the philosophy of the *Gymnosophists*; whilst Society was greatly divided by the dissensions of religionists;—when many causes predisposed the public mind to a change; when, “through the indolence of the Brahmins, the Vedas and their accompaniments had been neglected;”¹ and when ‘many people walked about in the world saying *I am Buddha*, *I am Buddha*, thus assuming the name of the great;’² the son of a powerful monarch that reigned at *Kapilavastu*, on the borders of *Nepal*, started as a *Buddha*, announcing himself as ‘the true *Jaina*,’ ‘the teacher of the three worlds,’—‘wiser than the wisest,’ and ‘higher than the highest;’ and proclaiming the doctrine of *VIRTUE*, which soon won its way to the hearts of a people ‘whose inclinations had already been imbued with admiration of this quality in their own ancient system.’

It has already been stated that he was a prince. That he received an education more than suited to his princely rank

¹ *Buddhavansa*.

² *Imasmim lōke ahan Buddhō ahan Buddhō ti uggatasa nāman gahetvā bahujanā vicharantī.*—*Comment to the Majjima Nikāya*.

appears clearly enough from the abstruse doctrines of his Philosophy. From his discourses,¹ which relate to the *Vedas* and *Vedanga*, he was doubtless well versed in Brahmanical lore. The "sixty-four alphabets" which he mastered, according to the *Lalita Vistara* (a book of no authority), may be more imaginary than real. Yet that he learnt most of the Arts and Sciences usually cultivated amongst the Indians may be believed. The *Buddhavansa* refers to his other accomplishments, and in the usual phraseology of Oriental exaggeration, he is said to have excelled a Samson in strength. Many of his feats in archery are detailed "in proof of his accomplishments in martial deeds." They were exhibited to prove his right to the hands of "the daughters of the proud Sakya tribes."²

The period that he passed as a *laic* was indeed short. Yet in that short period of 29 years he had enjoyed life to his heart's content. Revelling in the luxuries of the State, surrounded by a host of damsels, and attended by his bands of female musicians, he dwelt in the three 'palaces adapted for the three seasons.' The *Ramma* of nine stories he occupied during one; the *Surama* of seven at another; and the *Subha* of five at a third.³

A mind, however, constituted such as Siddharta's was, soon became satiated. The sharp edge of enjoyment had been speedily blunted. The zest of carnal pleasures had gradually subsided. He had not been long a father before he became disgusted with life. The form of a decrepit old man, bent with age and emaciated by disease, informed him of his own future condition. The lifeless body of one who had previously moved like himself, reminded him of the uncertainty of life, and of his own approaching dissolution. When he was pondering on these things, and the Brahmanical Golden rule—that "religious austerity was the summit of excellence;"⁴ and the figure of an Ascetic had arrested his gaze,—his mind was at once made up to renounce the world,

¹ See *Ambatta Suttan*, etc.

² *Buddhavansa*.

³ *Idem*.

⁴ *Dhammapada*—*Buddha-Vagga*.

its vanities, and its troubles. He preferred seclusion to the ceaseless pleasures of Society; and the yellow garment of a mendicant to the purple robes of state. In his estimation 'Heaven was superior to a Universal Empire, and the results of a *Sotapatti* to the dignities of the Universe.'¹

Whilst, therefore, "his female bands were playing airs on musical instruments"—whilst "the beauties of the Sâkya tribes were yet hymning forth the canticles of triumph and gratulation"—amidst all the enjoyments of life and the Oriental sports of the Park;—when, too, the national festivities of the City were in the thick; and when his beloved wife had been just delivered of a son—*Siddhârtha* departed!² He fled as from a pursuing enemy. He escaped as from a huge bôa ready to devour him. He fled and embraced Ascetism. He became *Buddha*; and after six years of seclusion, established his religion, which is called his *Dhamma*, or, as we name it, *Buddhism*.

Whilst other Teachers declared 'religious austerity to be the height of excellence,' Buddha taught it to consist in "Nibban." He set aside animal sacrifices. He held that no penance effaced sin. In his opinion the worship of the Gods and Manes availed nothing. With the exception of these and a few other matters, however, the Philosophy which Gôtama taught was not altogether new. It agreed in most essential matters with that of the Brahmans. The Ecclesiastical discipline of the one was equally that of the other—and the sameness of doctrine Gôtama traces to a piracy by the Brahmans of the doctrines of his predecessor Kassapa, and not to a *plagiarism* by himself of Brahmanical doctrines.³

Be this, however, as it might, the very doctrines of Gôtama proclaim the non-existence of *dhamma* before his advent. In the *abuddhôt* period which preceded his manifestation the *dhamma* had vanished. The agreement, therefore, between his doctrines and those of the Brahmans (if we, as we must,

¹ Dhammapadam; *end of Loka Vagga*.

² Buddhavansa.

³ See Ambatta Sutra.

divest him of the Inspiration to which he lays claim), leads to the irresistible conclusion that (in the language of Hodgson) Buddhism "arose out of those prior abominations which had long held the people of India in cruel vassalage to a bloated priesthood."

It is, indeed, not a little remarkable that the religion which had thus sprung out of Brahmanism soon out-numbered its parent. Some of the causes which led to this result demand attention. At first, doubtless, the different motives which influenced conversions were those common to all countries and all nations. "They were (as remarked by Gibbon) often capricious and accidental. A dream, an omen, the report of a miracle, the example of some priest or hero, the charms of a believing wife, and above all, the fortunate event of a prayer or vow,"¹ served to create a deep and lasting impression. The Buddhist annals represent Brahmans as being "indolent" at this time;² and we also perceive that the public mind was predisposed to a change. The character, too, of the individual who preached the new doctrine was not without its influence. Gôtama was a *prince*. He was descended from the renowned Sâkya tribe. He was the son of a king. He had left the luxuries of a principality for the privations of mendicity. He had deserted the throne of a king for the pulpit of a monk. Nay, more, he had renounced the world to accomplish the salvation of men. He was humble in his deportment. He was pious in his conduct. His admonitions came with the authority of a prince, the affection of a parent, and the sincerity of a friend. Such a person was rare—such conduct uncommon. It soon attracted attention. It was not only perceptible to the mind, it was also seen with the eye, people heard of it with their ears. It, therefore, served to them as an "*outward sign*." It was, indeed, a 'visible power.' It inspired them with confidence. It had a *powerful influence*.

The example of princes and nobles may also be mentioned.

¹ Gibbon, VI. p. 272.

² Sumangala Vilasini.

It had its due weight—*Yatà rajà tatà prajāh*: ‘As is the King, so are the subjects.’¹ This is the case in all countries, but peculiarly so with the people of the East. At the first dawn of Buddhism they had, as they still have, much in common with children. Like children they clung to their parental kings. Like children they listened to their parental advice. Above all they imitated their example, and embraced Buddhism. Other causes conspired to accelerate conversions. In the infancy of the Buddhist Church, its founder was not scrupulous as to admissions into the priesthood. He permitted the branded thief as well as ‘the proclaimed criminal’ to enter it.² He drew no distinction between the male and the female. He gave admission to the boy as well as the adult. He did not insist upon the consent of parents. The slave found a retreat in the seclusion of a monastery. Those who had been affected with infectious diseases were associated with the healthy priests. The priesthood became the refuge of those who had been pursued by the fury of creditors. The enlisted soldier deserted the service of his country and entered the *Panna Sālā*. It was, however, not till large numbers had embraced the new faith, thousands had entered the priesthood; and there was therefore not the same necessity for unlimited liberality in Ecclesiastical matters, that Gôtama laid down various restrictions. It was then, and not before, that inquiry was made as to any incurable disease of the candidate for Holy Orders. It was then, and not before, that regard was had to his being ‘a free man’ and ‘free from debt.’ It was then, too, that he was required to show that he was ‘not enlisted as a soldier,’ and that ‘he had his parents’ permission to become a recluse.’³

Amongst other causes, *Religious Toleration*, by which the Government of Buddhist Monarchs was distinguished, was not without its salutary effect on the spread of the new religion. That, when Buddhism arose, and kings and princes had enlisted their sympathies in its cause, the pre-existing

¹ Old Pali Proverb. ² Mahā Vagga. ³ The Laws of the Priesthood.

Brahmans and Sectarians were not persecuted, is a fact. Every one was allowed the free choice of a creed. No one lost a single state privilege; no one was deprived of his caste; and no one was subjected to any degradation by reason of the faith he preferred. Indeed, no form of faith was made *the Established Religion*. Notwithstanding the predominance of Buddhism, the Brahmans, too, enjoyed the free and undisturbed exercise of their religion. It was left unmolested. Its forms of worship were not reproached. Its professors were not reviled. They were not hindered in the exercise of their rites. Even the noisy and turbulent ceremonials of their Church received not the impediments created by the modern Police Regulations of far more liberal Governments. This was not all. Though Buddhism became 'the State religion,' yet the services of the Brahmans were not less in requisition than before. They were not excluded from their wonted avocations. They lost not their civil or political power. They still continued the *Prôhita*¹ Ministers of the Sovereign. They performed the greatest of all state ceremonies—the Consecration of Kings. They presided over all the various universities of the Empire. They were the *râja gurus* of the kingdom,—the most learned physicians of the people; and the Astrological or Astronomical Professors of the state. They received the same respect which was shown to the Buddhist priests. The people were enjoined to 'bestow gifts on Brahmans as well as on Sramanas.' The Rocks of Girnar, Dhali, and Kapurdigiri proclaim to this day the *religious toleration* of Piyadâsi, the most powerful and zealous of all Buddhist monarchs.

I have elsewhere expressed a conjecture as to the time when this state of things ceased. I shall now proceed with the subject, and with another cause for the wide extension of Buddhism—the *popularity of its doctrines*.

'Universal Equality' is a feeling inherent in the human mind. The first approach to a breach of this heavenly right,

¹ The domestic Chaplain, who was also a minister of state.

the slightest deviation from it, socially or politically, creates a feeling of uneasiness and even envy. No jealousy is more deep rooted or more inveterate than that which is occasioned by the deprivation of one's natural right in this respect. The feeling of the Indian classes, who were at this time bound hand and foot by a horrid system of caste by Brahmanical exclusiveness, may be easily conceived. All felt the deep degradation of their position, except the highest class of the highest caste. All, except that class, eagerly looked for emancipation. All, therefore, except that class, hailed with no ordinary feelings of pleasure the doctrine of *Universal Equality* which Gôtama preached. All with that single exception at first regarded the preacher as a benefactor, and his doctrine with admiration. But when those doctrines had been actually reduced to practice; when they saw the Kshetriya princes associated with Brahman converts—the Vaisya traders with the *Sudra* outcasts; and that all were placed upon the same level, subject to the same laws and in the enjoyment of the same privileges, the people received their benefactor with love, and made him an object of superstitious admiration. No wonder, then, that his religion was soon embraced by millions.

The last, though not the least cause which led to *conversions* was the mildness of Gôtama's *dhamma*; and this leads to the second head of my discourse.

II.—THE DOCTRINES OF BUDDHISM.

But before I proceed to give you a popular account of them, permit me to say a few words against a commonly received error—that Buddhism sanctions *Idol worship*. It is, indeed, remarkable that no religion in the world, that we are aware of, originated in the worship of idols. The Greeks, it is believed, at first worshipped 'an invisible God.' The ancient Persians 'thought it impious to exhibit the Creator under a human form.'¹ The Jews originally had "no other Gods" but Jehovah, whom they were interdicted from repre-

¹ Macaulay's *Essays*, p. 10.

senting by "any graven image, or the likeness of any thing." The primary doctrine of Brahmanism was "the unity of God," "whom they worshipped without a symbol." Buddhism, too, gave no sanction to idol worship. Its introduction was long after the death of Gôtama. In all countries, and amongst all nations, it originated from a desire to transfer from the mental to the natural eyes the sight of the object of adoration.

Man wants more than *abstraction*. He understands not mere verbiage, without an image to represent the idea conveyed by language. He desires (in the language of Mahindu) 'to have an object whom he could salute, before whom he could prostrate himself, at whose presence he could rise, and to whom he could pay reverent attention.'

It is in the very nature of man to long for a leader, and to set up a chief. The more ignorant the community, the greater is the desire manifested in this respect. As a child lives in the trust of that security which parental protection affords, so does the ignorant man look for the prop and support of a *leader*. Hence, the *monarchical* is the form of government which meets with general approbation. The author of our being saw this, when He promised "to dwell among the children of Israel," and "went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire," and when, too, He promised His presence "whenever two or three meet in His name." This inherent feeling of dependence on a higher being is evidenced by the fact that the Israelites, treated as they were by the Almighty, could not bear the prolonged absence of their leader, and longed for "gods which should go before them." In our own Island, after the Singhalese had deposed their King, and Ceylon had been placed under the Sovereign of England, whom they never saw, their uneasiness was great indeed. They wanted some one to be their leader, and a small section of misguided Kandians set up a *thief* as their king.¹ They preferred a

¹ See Blue Books of Ceylon for 1850.

vagabond whom *they saw*, to the Queen of England, or her representative, whom *they had never seen*. This feeling is, however, not confined to the State. It equally extends to the *Church*. The human mind yearns after some "visible and tangible object of worship." It loves to retain some relic of those whom it adores. As a mother would often retain a lock of hair of a deceased child, or a lover preserve as a token of remembrance some little trinket of her who inspired him with love, so the votaries of deities, the enthusiastic followers of religious teachers, upon the reflection that the object of their worship was no more and could not be seen, have "substituted *visible* for *invisible* objects." Thus the Greeks created innumerable gods and goddesses. The Persians transferred their worship from 'the supreme mind' to the 'lamp of day.' The Brahmans have formed 330,000,000¹ deities, around whom they could burn incense. The Jews 'fell down and worshipped a molten calf.' Even into the churches of Jehovah the 'jealous God,' did His followers introduce idols of the Virgin Mother, and the representatives of Saints. Nor were the Buddhists an exception to the rule. Upon the death of the Sage, his followers preserved his bones and teeth. This they did at first from no other feeling than that which is common in the human breast—*chittan pasà-dessanti*—'to cause the mind to be composed.'² All Buddhist countries vied with each other in the collection of the Relics. A lock of his hair and his *gicatta*³ were enshrined at Mahiyangana. Asôka built 84,000 monuments embodying the sacred relics. It was these that Mahindó characterized as *Buddha* himself, when he said, Mahà ràjà, our divine teacher has long been out of our sight; for, said he, 'whenever his sacred relics are seen our vanquisher himself is seen.'⁴ What was seen with the eye was the better fixed in the mind. The outward and visible signs were tokens of an inward and intellectual idea of the object of adoration.

¹ Elphinstone's India, I. p. 165.

³ Collar-bone.

² Dipāvansa.

⁴ Mahāvansa.

But Buddhism does not recognize Image-worship. Although the Chinese and Ceylon Buddhists have a legend to the effect that whilst Gôtama was alive, a *Pilime* statue of that Sage was made by the orders of the King of Kôsala; and although the Tibetan annals speak of Gôtama having expatiated upon the advantages arising from laying up his image;¹ and although *Dirya Aradâna* of the Nipal collection gives a story as to Gôtama's having recommended Bumbi Sâra to send a portrait of the Sage to Rudrayâna, King of Rôruka;² yet all this is regarded by the intelligent portion of the Buddhists in Ceylon as unfounded on fact; and therefore an invention of later times. A careful examination of Buddhist doctrines furnishes us with no authority at all for image worship; all that Gôtama left behind, as a substitute for himself after death, being his own doctrines *the dhamma*. His words were, 'Anando, let the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya*, which have been propounded to and impressed on thee by me, stand after my demise in the place of thy Teacher.'³ Yet the prevalence of image worship is great indeed in Buddhistical countries. When it was first introduced among the Buddhists of India and Ceylon does not clearly appear, but from the conduct of Asôka, who recognizes nothing of the kind in his Pillar Inscriptions, we may conclude that image worship was an innovation introduced at a period later than the date of the Inscriptions. The earliest mention of images in Ceylon is in the Mihintali Inscription of 241 A.D., which speaks of "image houses." Two hundred years afterwards, 410 A.D., Fa Hian saw "an image of blue Jasper in the Temple at Anurâdhapura." There is, however, much reason to believe that the images which were introduced into the Buddhist temples had not been originally intended for *worship*, any more than the statues of kings which were anciently placed side by side with the idols of Buddha and the devas. Speaking of these statues, says Colonel Forbes,

¹ As. Res., xx. p. 476.

² Life in Ancient India, p. 272.

³ Sumangala Vilasini; See B. J. vol. vi. p. 512.

‘In the Mahâ râja Vihâra there are upwards of fifty figures of Buddha, most of them larger than life; also a statue of each of the devas, Saman, Vishnu, Nâta, and the devî Pattani, and of two kings *Valanganbahu* and *Kirti Nisanga*.’

The period, then, at which the pre-existing idols became objects of worship was probably the time when Brahmanical rites became blended with those of the Buddhist Church—when she came to recognize the *Samyak Dristi* gods of the Hindu Pantheon—when she built temples for the worship of Vishnu—when she built an idol of him whom she considered “a supporting deity” of Gôtama—and when she commenced to make offerings to his idol, which stood alongside of Buddha.

As idol worship is conducted in honour of Buddha, and upon the supposition that it confers *spiritual* benefit, so likewise his doctrines are recited for the same end, and with a view also to avert *temporal* dangers. But there is no more authority for the last than for the first. The *Pârîta*, or the use of *exorcism*, is frequently resorted to, as a protection against apprehended danger from disease, or demoniac influences; but upon a careful examination of the discourses of Gôtama, it would seem to have been only *assented* to, but not enjoined, as a means for placating the demons. That is to say, although the study and frequent repetition of his discourses were recommended in place of himself ‘as the *teacher*,’ yet it does not appear that Gôtama believed any *temporal* benefit could be achieved by “exorcism,” beyond imparting religious consolation. And the extent to which it was authorized may be gathered from the *Pârîta* ceremony itself. When Gôtama was dwelling on *Gijjakuta*, and *Wessavana*, the king of the *Yakkhas*, once called on the Sage; the former, in course of conversation, alluded to the aversion of the *Yakkha* races to Buddha. The cause of it is stated to have been the inhibition of Buddha against their own ‘mal-practices, such as life-slaughter, theft, lewdness, lying, and drunkenness.’ From this aversion, which in savage tribes was tantamount to *hate*, the followers of Gôtama, as well as

the jungle Ascetic, suffered in various ways. Wesavanna, the king of the Yakkhas, who was an admirer of the Sage, was therefore desirous of averting these dangers from his own subjects. He wished to protect and defend the priests in their 'solitary retirements, free from noise and clamour.' He was anxious to keep them from harm's ways. He purposed to introduce peace into their cells. To effect all this it was necessary 'to placate the demons;' and this, again, could only be effected by an authoritative edict of his own. That edict is contained in the *Atánātiya*. It commenced with the virtues of Gôtama's predecessors. It alluded to Gôtama's own beneficence. It recounted the honours and worship which he had exacted from devas and men; and from Wesavanna himself. It enjoined the priest to learn and recite the hymns in which the above was recited. It declared the privileges of those who used it. It enjoined the demons "not even to approach with an evil design" a person who had recited the *Páritta*. It imposed a penalty for a breach of this command. The law of the king was thus made perfectly binding on his subjects. It was delivered; and Gôtama "consented to it by his silence."

This, it is apprehended, was the origin of the *Páritta* ceremony. To the *Atanatiya* have, however, been added, in course of time, various other discourses of Buddha, which had the tendency to restore peace and quiet to the sufferers, and to give "religious consolations" to the diseased. This appears from the discourses themselves, which contain no declaration of any 'temporal benefit.' Take the *Kassapa Bojjhanga* as an example. Kassapa was grievously ill, and Gôtama visited him in his cave, and found him 'without ease and repose.' The Sage preached on *contemplation, ascertainment of the truth, perseverance, contentment, placidity, tranquillity, and equanimity*. And these 'seven sections of moral science' he recited, not as a *direct* antidote against the ills of the flesh, but as a palliative to the sufferings of the mind, and as a *sine qua non* "for the attainment of knowledge, wisdom, and deliverance from transmigration." The priest recovered; but it is not stated he did so by the direct in-

fluence of the admonition. Such are the discourses added to *Atánatiya*, which form the *Hymns* usually sung to “the praise and glory” of *Buddha*, and to secure a deliverance from temporal ailments. Connected with the subject in hand, a few words on the origin of *Chèteyas* or *Thupas* may not be uninteresting:—

The *Parinibban Suttan* states that they “originated” upon the death of Gôtama, when “eight *Thupas* were built over the corporeal relics, a ninth over the *Kumbhan*, and a tenth over the charcoal of his funeral pile.”¹ And it would seem from the same *Suttan* that *Chèteyàni* existed in several parts of the *Majjhima desa* even during the lifetime of Gôtama. The *Atthakathà* explains that the *Chèteyàni* were not “Buddhistical shrines,” but *Yakkhattànàni* ‘erections for demon worship.’ That they partook of the nature of both *Temple* and *Thupa* may be inferred from the fact that whilst they were monuments of worship, they served also as rest-houses for the weary traveller. Gôtama himself repaired to the *Chèpala Chèteya* for rest, and he there expatiated on its splendour as well as that of many others.² It was, doubtless, from a contemplation of the busy throng of religious Enthusiasts who crowded these monuments of worship, that Gôtama gave his sanction for the erection of the *thúpas* over his own relics, and those of his disciples. Yet from the fact of “Universal Monarchs” being placed in the same category with *Buddha* and his *Sàvakas*, it would seem that the sage had no other object save that which we have for building places for divine worship—to make men religious.

Gôtama’s words were: *Tattha yé mālān vā gandhan vā vaṇṇakan vā àròpessanti abhivādessanti vā chittan vā pasādessanti tesān tan bhavissati dīgha-rattan hitāya sukhāya. . . . Ayan tassa Bhagavato arahatò sammā sambuddhassa thūpò —ti Ananda bahujaṇó chittan pasadenti tè tattha chittan pasādetvā kāyassa bhédā param maranā sugatim, saggan lōkan uppajjanti—M.P.S. v. 26, 27.*

‘If in respect of *thupas* any should set up flowers, scents,

¹ See Rhys Davids’s ‘*Buddhist Suttas*,’ p. 135.

² *ibid.* p. 40.

or embellishments, or should worship (them), or should (by such means) cause their minds to be *purified*,¹ such acts will conduce to their well-being and happiness. . . . Ananda, many thinking "that this is *thūpa* of the adorable, the sanctified, the omniscient, supreme Buddha," compose their minds; and when they have caused their minds to be *cleansed*, they, upon the dissolution of the body after death, are born in a glorious heavenly world.'

I now return to the doctrines of Buddhism, or the religion of Gôtama. It is defined by himself to mean "the path of immortality."² It acknowledges man's sinful nature—represents him as altogether sinful, and his heart 'deceitful' and 'desperately wicked.' It enjoins the necessity of regeneration, of subjugating the evil passions, and a thorough change of the heart. It says in plain words, that neither his extraction from the noblest of progenitors, nor the influence of education, will secure him salvation. It admonishes him to abstain from covetousness. It warns him against "the cares of life," to the neglect of religion; against pride and "self-righteousness, which make a god of himself;"³ and against evil-speaking, lying, slandering, and unprofitable conversation. It inculcates all the virtues which ennoble the soul: patience, forbearance, forgiveness, charity, chastity, humility, gratitude, obedience, etc., etc. And these it sums up in one Golden rule which it enacts, 'Reverence to Parents, Charity to the Poor, Humanity to Animals, and Love towards all Mankind.'

Whilst we are thus enabled to hold up some of its doctrines to the admiration of the world, it must, however, be borne in mind that the religion which has "immortality" for its end, seeks not the eternal joys of heaven, but the immolation of life,—the cessation from existence as "no good equal to it"—and the extinction of being as "the best thing;"⁴ and that the observance of religion or *brahmacha-*

¹ *Pisādessanti*, 'cause to be purified or cleansed,' or to 'bring about a religious turn of mind.'

² Dhammapada—Appamāda Vagga, § 1.

³ See Attanagalu Vansa, Pali Version.

⁴ Dhammapada; Sukha-Vagga.

*riyá*¹ is not "perfect freedom," but a life of asceticism, fettered by restraints of no ordinary hardship. Buddhism, indeed, ignores what we call the "soul." It denies the existence of a *creator*. It knows of no being who may be called *Almighty*. According to its teachings, all the elements of existence are dissolved at death; and yet life transmigrates! The greatest happiness is therefore devised to be *Nirváná*.

Upon each of these points I purpose to say a few words; and

1. Buddhism denies anything like the Brahman *átman*, or own-self, or *paramátman*, 'eternal-self,' or what we call 'the soul.' It forbids us to say "*I am*," or "this is *I*." Man is composed of five *khandas*—'organized body,' 'sensation,' 'perception,' 'discrimination' (including all the powers of reasoning), and 'consciousness.' And it cannot be predicated of any of these, or of their attributes the 12 *ayatanáni*, which are 'the eye and the objects of sight, the ear and sound, nose and smell, the tongue and flavour, the body and touch;' 'mind or power of thought' and 'objects of thought'²—that they constitute 'ego.' Of each of the above, Gótama teaches—'*I am* not this'—'*this* is not my soul'—*na m'eso attá*'—'This is not a soul to me.' It is a nonentity. His words are: "Priests, it should be distinctly known as a fact, that the *rúpa* or perceptible body is transient,—that that which is impermanent is (full of) sorrow—that that which is *sorrow* is not the (*self*) soul; that any thing which is not the *self* is 'not mine.' 'It is not *ego*'—'*it is not my soul*.'³ It is simply 'existence' or life."

2. Life, according to Buddhism, had no intelligent Creator. It was the result of chance—not of design. It was the consequence of *Kamma*, 'good or evil merit,' produced by *avidyá* or 'ignorance.'⁴ Here the creator is not an active agent. He represents nothing corporeal or spiritual. It is an abstract

¹ See Mahavagga.

² See the Rev. D. J. Gogerly's Translation in the "Friend," vol. ii. p. 87, *et seq.*

³ *Ib.*

⁴ "Ceylon Friend," April, 1830.

quality, without itself a cause or Creator. One abstraction produces another abstraction. The last, a third; and so on—until we have ‘life,’ this form of human existence. Gôtama himself, according to a beautiful figure of speech in the Institutes of *Manu*,¹ compares man to a ‘mansion;’ and designates ‘the first cause’ by the name of *gahâ-kâraka*,² or ‘house-builder.’ But he exults with joy that the *creature* has risen above the Creator; and that the architect had no longer the power to build for him another house! The creature is thus not responsible to the “First cause,” which lays down no laws for his guidance, and is unable to do anything either for good or for evil. The Creator, as we have seen, does not control life’s existence. Indeed, he bears no more relation to man than the leaf does to the butterfly which leaves it after various changes. The creature, therefore, is the *Lord* over his own life. It was in accordance with such doctrines that Sirisangabô, one of our ancient monarchs, exclaimed in offering his head as a propitiation, ‘I am the Lord over my own body!’³

3. Thus, there is no Supreme being who may be called *Almighty*. True it is that Gôtama is styled ‘the greatest of all beings;’ but his own conduct and doctrines show that he was not omnipotent.

It is stated in the *Parinibban Suttan* of the Buddhistical

¹ Institutes, cap. vi. §§ 76, 77.

² ‘Through transmigrations of numerous births have I run, not discovering, (though) seeking the house-builder: birth again-and-again [is] sorrow. O house-builder! thou art seen. Thou shalt not again build a house [for me]. All thy ribs are broken [by me]. The apex of the house is destroyed. [My] mind is inclined to *nibban*. [It] has arrived at the extinction of desire.’

Note.—It may be remarked that *anekajîti sansâran*, which is in the accusative, should be treated as a noun in the vocative, owing to its connection with an intransitive verb. *Sandhivissan*, ‘I will run,’ is in the *bhavissanti* or ‘future tense,’ and not *conditional*. Owing, however, to a Rule by which the future takes an *ajjatani* or a past signification [see Pânini, iii. 2, 112; also Ballantyne’s *Laghu kaumudi*, p. 314, No. 799], both Mr. Turner and Mr. Hardy have correctly rendered this into the *ajjatani*, in which sense the Commentator interprets it, *sansârin* or *apara paran anuvicharin*. ‘My mind is inclined to *nibban*’ is, as I conceive, the nearest meaning which can be assigned to the words, ‘the mind has attained [to the knowledge of] destruction.’ See Mr. Fausböll’s remarks on these difficult verses in his *Dhamma padan*, p. 320; and the text at p. 28 of the same work.

³ Saka sarirassa ahamêva—Attanagaluvansa.

annals that a being like *Buddha* who had attained to the sanctification of the four *iddhipada*, may live any period of time, even a *kappa*, if he should desire it. But I need not tell you that this is a myth. When in "fourscore years" Gôtama's age had "attained the *fullest maturity*," and death stared him in the face, he was importuned by *Ananda*, his favourite disciple, "Lord Bagawa, vouchsafe to live a *kappa*."¹

This was, however, an impossibility. Gôtama knew this; and it is, indeed, melancholy to observe the quibble to which he resorts. He answers: "Afflict me not with unavailing importunity." Ananda could not believe his own senses, for what he had now heard militated against his master's doctrines of a previous day; and the former in language of remonstrance addressed Gôtama: "Lord, *from thyself* have I heard, and *by thyself* have I been taught, that to whomsoever is vouchsafed the sanctification of the four *iddhipada*, he may live a *kappa*; and *to thee*, Tathâgato, is vouchsafed that great power."

The Sage could not fail to perceive the force of Ananda's speech, not to call it *accusation*. He was driven to the necessity of making a reply; and he had no alternative but to resort to the paltry quibble of preferring a counter-charge against his accuser—viz. that '*he* had failed in *his* duty to make the request when the announcement of Gôtama's approaching dissolution was *originally* made.' What signified that he was late? If it was a proper request, and he had the power to grant it, the *time* at which it was made was of no consequence, and could by no means affect the granting of the application.

But, according to the very doctrines of Buddhism, not only is it not true that a timely application from Ananda would have enabled him to prolong his life even to the extent of a *kappa*; but it is also not true that any being had the power to do so. Buddhism recognizes *predestination*; and it is made to appear in the *Parinibban Suttan* that 'the ap-

¹ Parinibban Suttan.

proaching dissolution of Gôtama being irrevocably fixed, Mâra prevented Ananda from preferring his request.' Now, predestination is inconsistent with the almighty power here laid claim to. Predestination pre-supposes the absence of power. It takes away volition. It restricts action. It circumscribes power. It renders "importunity unavailing." "Gôtama's appointed time had come." He himself had declared it at the close of his probational meditation. He himself had stated that at the particular period of his manifestation, 'the term human existence was one hundred years,' and that it appeared to be the proper age for his advent.¹ He could not, therefore, add a minute to his term of existence. For, he was not Almighty.

This was so plain and clear, that the bigotted advocates of Buddhism have given up the line of defence adopted by the Sage himself, and have resorted to a still more miserable quibble of supporting his statement upon verbal grounds. Both Nâgasena in the *Milindappanna*, and Moggalliputta Tissa, the holder of the last convocation, in one of his *Vâdas*, states, that when Gôtama declared the power of one who had attained the four *iddhipâda* to live a *kappa*, or any part of a *kappa*, he only meant, in the ordinary acceptation of "kappa,"—"the ordinary age of man, which was 100 years." It is, indeed, true that *kappa* means "age," or "the period of existence."² But this is not its only meaning. Nor is this its ordinary acceptation. It also means an immense period of time during which the world itself lasts in each of its regenerations. Now, every one except an idiot, Nâgasena, and Moggalliputta Tissa, could perceive at a glance that Gôtama, in stating the superior power of one who had attained the four *iddhipâda*, did not refer to the inherent quality of humanity, the ordinary age of man, but alluded to what ordinarily man did not possess—a power to prolong life to the extent of a *kappa*. If, therefore, this meant "any period of time within the age usually allotted to men"—which, however, Ananda himself clearly ignores by his reiterated appli-

¹ Buddhavausa.

² Gogerly : Wilson and Spiers.

cation, and Gôtama as clearly by his reply—that Sage laid down an absurdity. He declared what every idiot knew. He pronounced that, to be the reward of a particular kind of sanctity, which was simply an inherent quality of every man, however sinful. If, again, such was the meaning which Gôtama intended to convey, nothing could have been easier than to silence Ananda at once. For, at the time he importuned Gôtama to live a kappa or half of a kappa, Gôtama had, in point of fact, lived a much longer period than half of man's age.

4. From this digression I return to the subject, and to the *Ontology* of Buddhism. Although hells without number have, without a Creator, sprung up for the punishment of the wicked, yet it is not the sinner who is punished in them. Although Buddha has often declared his own identity with certain characters in the *Jâtakas*;¹ yet all this is not supported by his doctrines. According to those doctrines, the *nama* and *rûpa* which constitute this life are not identical with the *nama* and *rûpa* of the life hereafter.² One being therefore suffers for another. One's sins are visited upon another. The sinner and the sufferer are not therefore identical. 'If there is a dissolution of all the elements of existence at death, it follows that there is no hereafter, and no future world to that existence.'³

5. Yet the doctrine of Buddhism is, that life transmigrates; and that everything changes constantly from man to beast, from beast to fowl, and from fowl to creeping things. There is therefore an eternal cycle of existence. The law of merits and demerits alone causes the degree of happiness or misery of all beings. This also is full of uncertainty. Though merits are said to be more powerful than demerits; and however abundantly a being may perform meritorious

¹ *e.g.* At the close of *Appanaka Jataka*, Buddha says:—"The former unwise merchant and his company are the present *Dêwadatta* and his disciples; and I was then the wise merchant."

² *Milindappanna*.

³ Hardy's *Eastern Monachism*, p. 396.

deeds, yet upon his worldly dissolution he can have no hope of happiness in an after-birth; for the demerits of a former existence might outweigh the good deeds of this life. He dies, therefore, "without hope," and, as we have already said, "without God."

Now, as already remarked, no religion has worked so great a revolution—no creed has had so many votaries—no faith has lasted so long a period, as Buddhism. Yet no religion is calculated to create a greater despondency in the human mind than Buddhism. Like the religion of the Christian, Buddhism may, perhaps, be "the bond of charity," "the curb of evil passions," "the teacher of morality;" but, decidedly, it is *not* "the consolation of the wretched," the support of the timid," and "the hope of the dying." There is nothing in it to cheer "the weary and the heavy-laden." There is nothing to give a hope to the guilty. There is nothing to encourage the penitent sinner. No encouraging words, such as "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," are to be found in the Pitakattaya. No promise of forgiveness gives the Buddhist a hope of salvation. No 'knock, and it shall be opened' welcome greets his ear. On the contrary, everything in the Buddhist Bible is calculated to alarm him. This in the language of Buddhism is indeed a state of things "full of evil, misery, and pain." Yes,—to one who has no notion of an eternal existence hereafter—to whom God hath not revealed by His Holy Spirit the unspeakable joys of heaven, *Life* is a dreary waste; existence is devoid of those fascinations which the Christian alone feels; and heaven is not a place of "rest," but a temporary habitation of enjoyment. In vain, therefore, are the efforts of a Missionary of the Cross to win the souls of the Buddhists by presenting before him scenes of heavenly bliss. Talk to him of 'that holy calm'—'that sweet repose'—'the Cherubim and the Seraphim that continually do cry, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth'—of the throngs of lovely angels, who bow "towards either throne"—'with a shout

Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
As from blest voices, uttering joy.'

Speak to him of 'Crowns of glory' 'inwove with amarant and gold'—of 'the hallelujahs of the glorified'—'the troops of sister spirits arrayed in the purest white'—of 'the ceaseless songs of sweet music.' Set before him in the most glowing language of poetry 'the palms of conquest'—'the beatific vision' and 'beatitude past utterance.' Picture to his mind's eye 'the sense of new joy ineffable diffused—love without end, and without measure grace'—'the near communion with God,' and the 'bright effluence of bright essence increate'—all appear to him infected with blemish, imperfection, and impermanence—all appears to him "foolishness;" aye, "the baseless fabric of a vision which leaves no wrack behind!" All *heavenly* to him is all what *earthly* is to the inspired Preacher, "vanity and vexation of spirit"—and why? Simply because *Heaven* to the Buddhist is not what it is to the Christian—

'The end of care, the end of pains.'

Existence in the eye of Buddhism is nothing but misery. It is connected with disease, decay, and death. It is subject to 'grief, wailing, pain, anguish, despair, and disappointment.' It resembles a blazing fire which dazzles the eye, but torments us by its effects. There is nothing real or permanent in the whole universe. "Everything perishes."

6. Nothing then remained to be devised as a deliverance from this evil but the destruction of existence itself. This is what the Buddhists call *Nirwana*.

So far as I can understand this abstruse doctrine, it is not Absorption. Viewed in every light in which the subject may be considered, and tested by all the definitions and arguments contained in the Canonical works on Buddhism, *Nibban* is (to use an expression of Professor Max Müller) *Nihilism*, the annihilation of existence, the same as the extinction of fire. That such is the fact appears also from the *pragna paramita*, and the Metaphysics of Kasyapa. It is, moreover, proved by the very nicknames which the Brahmans apply to their Buddhist opponents, viz. *Nastikas*—'those who maintain destruction or nihilism;' and *Sunyavadins*—'those who maintain that there is a universal void.'

A difference of opinion exists,¹ and that difference has arisen from the mode of teaching adopted by Buddhists, and the figures of speech contained in Buddhist works. As “nothing” or *Nihilism* is said to be a paradise or *immortality*, and he who denies a deity is himself deified,—*Nibban*, which has no locality, is compared to a “*City*.” From a belief that the subject is not easily comprehended, it is said ‘none could *perceive* it except a sanctified *Arahanta*.’ When people denied the truth of this doctrine, it was necessary to make a strong affirmation to the effect that ‘*Nirwana* is.’ These are, indeed, expressions which, without being retracted or explained, compelled even *Nagasena* to declare ‘the doctrine of *Nibban* was beyond all computation a *mystery*.’

Such briefly are the most important of the doctrines of Buddhism. And we shall now turn to the remaining point of inquiry :—

III.—WHAT ARE ITS PROSPECTS ?

There are, indeed, good grounds for believing that Buddhism will, at no very distant period, disappear from this Island. There is, moreover, a hope for Ceylon, which, alas ! we have not for India. The two countries are, in this respect, at least, differently circumstanced ; and the difference is too wide to expect for both the same results from missionary labours, or to predict the same period of time for their conversion to Christianity. The hope for Ceylon arises from various considerations ; and we shall here notice the influence of Caste on religion. It is a fact that the Singhalese are not so much attached to the system of *Castes* as their neighbours on the Continent of India. Caste exists in Ceylon, but with greater force in India. Here it is a mere Custom, there a part of the Hindu national Institutes. Here it is more political than religious, there more religious than political. Here no man loses his Caste by the adoption of a new faith—there the Brahman becomes an utter outcast

¹ There is much doubt in the world relative to Nirwana.—*Milindapprasna*.

by changing his creed. Though demurred to at first in a well-known Hall by the higher classes of the Singhalese, we nevertheless find all castes and classes meeting together in the jury box with the greatest harmony. All alike sit on the same form in our Christian Churches; and all alike partake of the same cup, the wine that is distributed at the Lord's Supper. Wellales now follow different trades, which were anciently restricted to the lower orders; and occasionally marriages take place between persons of different castes. Caste is thus losing its iron grasp on the affections of the Singhalese. Although in many parts of the Island these changes take place unperceived and unreflected on by the people, yet in others, where they are fully alive to the innovations which affect their social condition, have we frequently heard the exclamation, "This is not surprising—it must take place—Buddha himself has declared it." Yes,—that great sage, like Mahomet, with a foresight and penetration of mind which deserve commendation, predicted the change: the abolition of caste. His words were, "at a distant period" (and now more than twenty-four centuries have elapsed from the date of the prediction) "princes will confer offices on mean people. The nobles will have no means of support. They will therefore give their children in marriage to the mean; and thus confusion of castes and classes will be the result. The low will become high, and the high low, and the nobles will be dependent upon the mean!"¹

Combined with this state of things, which affords a help to Christianity, is the absence in the Buddhist mind of that warmth and fervour in behalf of his faith which exist in the votaries of other religions. The Buddhist looks upon Christianity without jealousy—nay, more, there is a disposition on his part to conform to the religion of the Bible along with the faith of his forefathers. Neither is this feeling a creature of modern and enlightened times. So far back as the age of the great Asôka, the liberal monarch of Asia,

¹ Saddharmaratnâkara.

we find that far from any hostility being shown to other religions, Buddhists actually honoured them. Thus, in one of the inscriptions of that Buddhist sovereign, we find it declared that 'there are circumstances where the religion of others ought to be honoured, and in acting thus a man fortifies his own faith, and assists the faith of others. He who acts otherwise diminishes his own faith and hurts the faith of others.'¹

Among the many helps to conversions to Christianity in this Island is the great desire manifested among the Singha-
lese to be instructed in European science and literature.

Now, Buddhism mingles religion with science. The law of earthquakes is taught in the same books which contain admonitions for the salvation of man. The means for the attainment of *Nibban* are pointed out by the same teacher, who propounds that *eclipses* are caused by the monsters *Rahu* and *Khetu*. The doctrine of the earth being a firm flat, around Mount *Meru*, and twice seven circles of mountains and seas, rests upon the authority which inculcates *Silan* as the highest religious duty. The same *dhamma* which teaches that man's soul is a nonentity teaches also that the earth rests on water, water on wind, and the wind on air. These religious propositions are again so interwoven with the *physical* that we cannot well sever the one from the other. The overthrow of one must therefore affect the stability of the other. If one can be disproved, the other will share in that result. Many have already detected the errors in the Buddhist works. Already there are many who are converts to the European doctrine of 'the rotundity of the earth;' and the native mind is even now prepared to reject the absurdities upon this point in the legends of *Gôtama*. Already many Buddhists have rejected some books which their forefathers regarded as works of authority—already there are men who, though not Christians, yet disbelieve that the hollow on Adam's Peak was an impression left by *Gôtama*;

¹ Girnar Inscip. in Bl. A.S. Journal.

and, already they are impressed with the impropriety of *Idol-worship*; and even orthodox Buddhists doubt that it was sanctioned by Buddha.

The English schoolmaster is abroad. The village *Pansals*, in which were hitherto congregated the youth of the surrounding hamlets, are deserted. The priesthood are thus deprived of their *Ebittayas*, those "bit-boys" who once formed their proud retinue. But the children, on the other hand, are better educated in Mission Schools, where, in addition to elementary instruction, they learn the Word of God.

Thus it cannot be doubted that, with the growth of intelligence, and the increase of scientific knowledge, the Singhalese will, ere long, perceive the errors of Buddhism; and that the detection of one error will lead to the discovery of another, and another, until at last the people will not only be constrained, but prepared in all soberness, to adopt the religion of the Bible.

A powerful means by which Buddhism is failing in the stand it had originally made in this Island is the discouragement which is offered to the native Pundits. They do not, under the British Government, derive any of the benefits or enjoy the privileges which were conferred on them in a by-gone day. The priesthood, from want of adherents to their faith, are more occupied with secular concerns than with the study of their scriptures. The books, too, are getting very scarce, and copyists still more so. "This process of decay," says Mr. Hardy, "is already apparent in Ceylon."¹ There being no outward stimulus to exertion, the priests exhibit no enthusiasm of study, and many of them are unable to read at all"—I believe he meant *the Pali works of Buddhism*.

Another and yet more important cause affecting the state and prospects of Buddhism is the dissemination of Christianity through the agency of the missionary. Many who were Buddhists when they first entered the Mission Schools

¹ Eastern Monachism, p. 366.

have become convinced, in the course of their education, of the errors of their religion, and of the truth of the Gospel, and have consequently abandoned their early faith and are now employed in the work of the missions, teaching their convictions to others, and preaching the Word of God. That same zealous missionary from whom I have just quoted says, and says it conscientiously and correctly—"I see before me looming in the distance a glorious vision, in which the lands of the East are presented in majesty—happy, holy, and free."¹ Indeed, there is a ray of light which will ere long burst into full day. Christianity is planted in the households of the Singhalese and in the hearts of the people. Its influence, though silently progressive, is yet felt in our everyday intercourse with our countrymen. The success of the missionary may be traced in the progressive change in the Singhalese mind.

Already there are thousands of Christians, *true Christians*, of all denominations, whether Roman Catholics or Protestants, who are not ashamed, as are the Hindus of Asia, to take up the cross of Jesus, and amidst their bigotted clansmen, to avow their belief in Him who for our sakes came down as the son of a carpenter, and had for His associates the poor fishermen of Galilee. But "however scanty may be the outward evidence of actual conversions," as remarked by Sir Emerson Tennent, "there are symptoms perceptible which afford good grounds of hope for the future."

Gôtama himself, with a penetrating mind and a capacious intellect, which take in not only the subtle philosophy of his creed, but what we are here called upon to admire the most, all the encouraging signs of the passing times, and the hopeless prospects of the future, predicted the downfall of Buddhism. He has given five signal epochs for the ascertainment of the declension of his doctrines. They are the following: The first, when the means by which the paths to Nirwana are attained, will be lost; the second, when the observance

¹ Hardy on Buddhism, p. xiii.

of the precepts by the priesthood will be neglected; the third, when the greater part of the doctrinal writings, together with the Pali language in which they are written, will disappear; the fourth, when the priests will continue to degenerate, that is to say, they will begin to take life, and to plough and sow, and to walk about with a strip of cloth on their arms as a mark of their order; and the fifth, when Buddha's relics will disappear altogether.¹ For the consummation of all this, Gôtama has given the same period of time which God in his mercy has assigned for the manifestation of the Saviour—"forty centuries or 4000² years." Bold assertions! Extravagant hope! Yet it is not a little remarkable that more than half of this period has already elapsed. Two thousand four hundred and forty-nine years may seem to us earthly mortals, whose 'days' are 'as a shadow that passeth away,' or, 'as it were, a span long,' an immense long period of time. Yet in the sight of Him 'a thousand years are but as yesterday,' that which is 'past' is 'as a watch in the night.' He allowed 4000 years to pass before he produced "the seed of the woman" to "bruise the serpent's head." It was, nevertheless, "in the fullness of time." Twenty-three centuries, then, during which Buddhism has flourished, may not be a matter for surprise. "Buddhism, like all the ancient religions of the world, may have but served to prepare the way of Christ by helping, through its very errors, to strengthen and to deepen the ineradicable yearnings of the human heart after the truth of God."³ Of the predicted time, however, a period of nearly seventeen centuries still remains; and although the Buddhist books have not been lost, and the Pali language (which will form the subject of my next lecture) is still in a high state of cultivation, it is, nevertheless, certain that the extinction of Buddhism will take place before the remainder of the term

¹ Saddhamaratnâkara.

² Some of the Ceylon books represent this as 5000. But it is supposed to be a mistake.

³ Prof. Max Müller's Sanscrit Lit. p. 32.

shall have been added to the bygone period. And, with the signs of the times to which I have briefly adverted, we may reasonably anticipate the speedy arrival of that time when 'the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ;' when Jesus with his saints shall commence his reign of a 'thousand years;' when the nations will worship the one Jehovah; and when 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.'
