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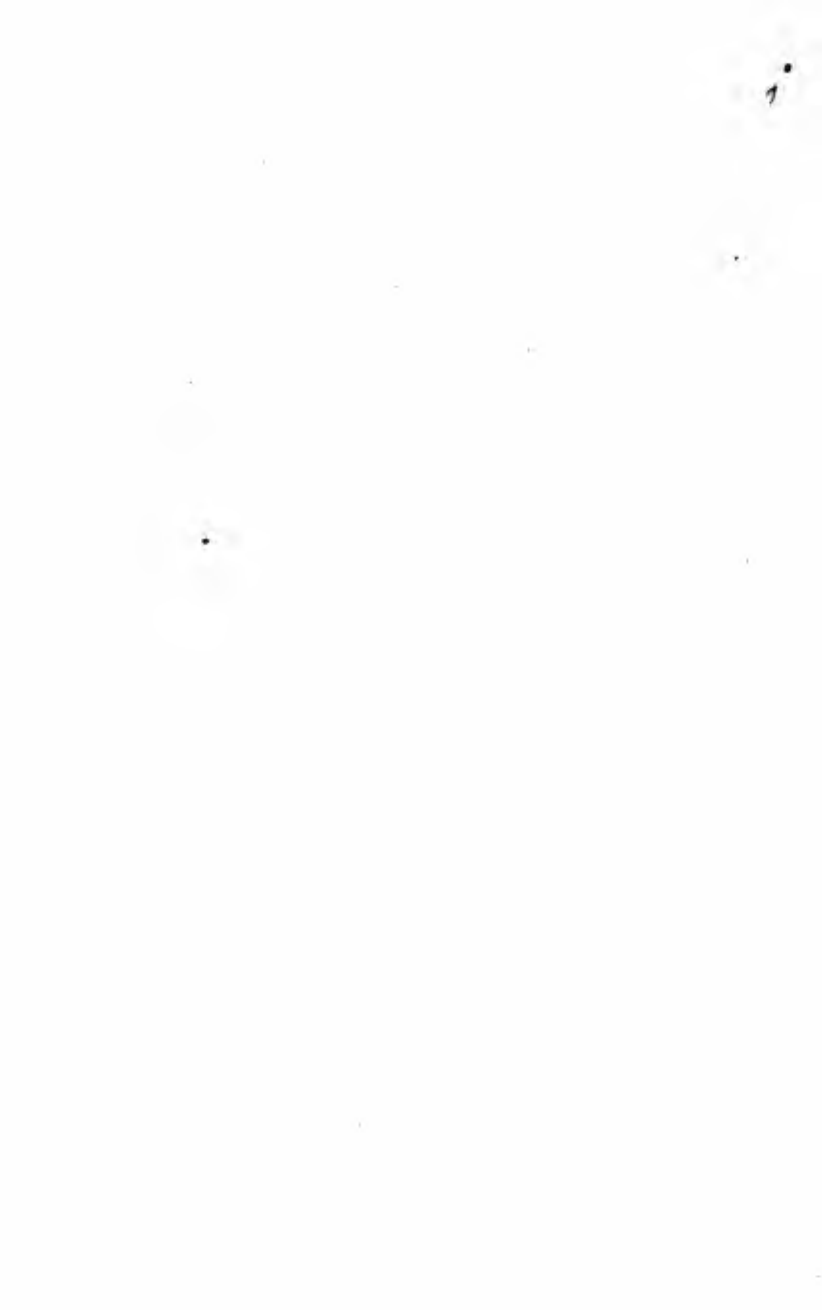
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MANUAL OF BUDDHISM



WORKS BY  
SAMUEL BEAL, B.A.

(Trin. Coll., Camb.),

late Professor of Chinese, University College,  
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# A MANUAL OF BUDDHISM

BY

DUDLEY WRIGHT

AUTHOR OF

"THE FOURTH DIMENSION," "WAS JESUS AN ESSENE?" ETC., ETC.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY

PROFESSOR EDMUND MILLS, D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S.

CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OF THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF  
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

2307

*"Not even a god can change into defeat the victory of a man who has  
vanquished himself."—DHAMMAPADA.*

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Wyi

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO., LTD.  
BROADWAY HOUSE, CARTER LANE, E.C.

1912

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
DELHI.

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PREFACE

I HAVE endeavoured in this short treatise to present a systematically arranged outline of, and thus an introduction to, the teachings of Buddhism; and in order that these teachings may be comprehended, even by those who have no knowledge whatever of the subject, the use of Pali expressions has been avoided. Whenever possible the words ascribed to the Buddha Himself have been quoted, and for this purpose recourse has been made to the work of Dr Paul Carus on *The Gospel of Buddha* in the Religion of Science Library, and a few quotations have also been taken from Professor S. Beal's translation of *Texts from the Buddhist Canon*, both of which works issued are by Messrs Kegan Paul, the publishers of this volume.

DUDLEY WRIGHT.

AUTHORS' CLUB,  
LONDON, S.W.

Amant Stationery, Delhi - 110014 - 14/3/37





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## INTRODUCTION

WE live in an age of free enquiry and much independence of thought. Among other matters, religions of all kinds are continuously undergoing investigation, and the results are spread by the press amid all classes. We are asking the time-honoured question—but not now with the genial sarcasm of the Roman governor—What is Truth? Is it the same thing as a creed? Can it cure sorrow? Can it give me eternal hope? Can it explain the misery of the world—the misery that has ever been in the burden of all great literatures and in every conscious heart? Such demands have to be faced, and there is no evading them.

To a European in search of salvation our Eastern friends would bid us look farther afield than has been our wont hitherto. They tell us, with their new revival voices, that twenty-five centuries ago the great problems of life, of

conduct, and of human destiny were answered in clear and unhesitating language by the greatest missionary of any age—the Buddha. They would bid us turn to Him for the one relief of past distress, for the one Path that leads to life everlasting, to the Ultimate Peace.

Here and there individuals or little groups of sincere thinkers are considering these sublime teachings and taking them home. The gentle Master has been to them a great deliverer. Far from barring research and imposing a faith under terror, He assures us that nothing can give us rest but ourselves; that salvation can only come from our own efforts; that even He is merely a teacher. Whoso will reason out what is best for himself, and at the same time for others, has Right Belief.

And assuredly the Path of the Buddha is strangely attractive. No wonder it has more travellers than any other. There is no department of life, not even any great truth of science, with which it is out of harmony or which it does not illumine. It does not invite us to torture our minds or bodies, but rather to treat them with assiduous care as instruments on the way. It assures us of the

possibility of utter attainment even in this life—of final salvation in any case. Meanwhile it bids us pursue righteousness with diligence, to be kind to others as if they were not others, to be tender and considerate to every living being.

A system so wide, so convincing, so sweet in appeal, requires, of course, a copious literary embodiment. A beginning has, indeed, been made here and in America by translating several of the great Pali works which constitute the Buddhist Canon; and this labour is in progress. But much is needed to supplement this in the way of exposition and variety of presentment.

Mr Dudley Wright has had these many considerations before him, and now comes appropriately before us with practised pen, in a little book on Buddhism, mainly in the lucid and beautiful words of the Buddha Himself. I may perhaps be permitted to speak well of its arrangement, and how pithily telling it is—a pocket-book for earnest men.

I have called this a "little" book. But there are no little books on Buddhism.

EDMUND J. MILLS.



# MANUAL OF BUDDHISM

## THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

1. Right Comprehension or Right Knowledge.
2. Right Resolutions, Aims, or Aspirations.
3. Right Speech.
4. Right Acts, Conduct, or Behaviour.
5. Right Way of earning a Livelihood.
6. Right Efforts or Exertion.
7. Right Thoughts or Contemplation.
8. Right State of a Peaceful Mind—Ecstasy or Meditation.

## THE SEVEN JEWELS OF THE LAW

1. Purity.
2. Calmness.
3. Comprehension.
4. Bliss.
5. Wisdom.



6. Perfection.
7. Enlightenment.

These are manifested in seven ways :—

1. Earnest Meditation.
2. Great Struggle against Sin.
3. Aspiration for Saintship.
4. Moral Powers.
5. Producing the Organs of Spiritual Sense.
6. Wisdom.
7. Righteousness.

### *Earnest Meditation*

There are four earnest meditations on Impermanence.

1. The meditation on the Body.
2. The meditation on Sensation.
3. The meditation on Ideas.
4. The meditation on the Nature of Things.

Salvation consists in not yielding to bodily impurity, recognising and avoiding the dangers that lurk in sensuality; in not becoming a prey to the illusions of the mind; and in recognising the instability of all composite things.

*The Great Struggle against Sin*

This, also, is fourfold.

1. The struggle to prevent sin from arising.
2. The struggle to put away sin that has arisen.
3. The struggle to produce goodness that does not yet exist.
4. The struggle to increase the goodness already in existence.

*Aspiration for Saintship*

This, again, is fourfold.

1. The will to acquire saintship.
2. The necessary exertion.
3. A thorough preparation of the heart.
4. Self-discipline.

*Moral Powers*

These are five in number.

1. Self-reliance.
2. Indefatigableness.
3. Watchfulness.
4. Concentration.
5. Self-control.

*Organs of Spiritual Sense*

These are five in number.

1. Faithfulness.
2. Activity.
3. Thoughtfulness.
4. Attention.
5. Discretion.

*Wisdom*

There are seven kinds of Wisdom.

1. Energy.
2. Thought.
3. Contemplation.
4. Investigation.
5. Cheerfulness.
6. Response.
7. Serenity.

*Righteousness*

This is obtained by entering and following the eightfold path.

*Avoiding the Ten Evils*

Buddha said :—

“All acts of living creatures become bad by ten things, and by avoiding the ten things they become good. There are three evils

of the body, four evils of the tongue, and three evils of the mind.

“The evils of the body are—murder, theft, and adultery; of the tongue—lying, slander, abuse, and idle talk; of the mind—covetousness, hatred, and error.

“I teach you to avoid the ten evils:—

- “1. Kill not, but have regard to life.
- “2. Steal not, neither do ye rob; but help everybody to be master of the fruits of his labour.
- “3. Abstain from impurity, and lead a life of chastity.
- “4. Lie not, but be truthful. Speak the truth with discretion, fearlessly, and in a loving heart.
- “5. Invent not evil reports, neither do ye repeat them. Carp not, but look for the good sides of your fellow beings, so that you may with sincerity defend them against your enemies.
- “6. Swear not, but speak decently and with dignity.
- “7. Waste not the time with gossip, but speak to the purpose or keep silence.

- "8. Covet not, nor envy, but rejoice at the fortunes of other people.
- "9. Cleanse your heart of malice, and cherish no hatred, not even against your enemies; but embrace all living beings with kindness.
- "10. Free your mind of ignorance, and be anxious to learn the truth, especially in the one thing that is needed, lest you fall a prey either to scepticism or to errors. Scepticism will make you indifferent, and errors will lead you astray, so that you shall not find the noble path that leads to life eternal."

## THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

### PATH I

#### *Right Comprehension or Right Knowledge*

The Buddha said :—

“There is self, and there is truth. Where self is, truth is not. Where truth is, self is not. Self is individual separateness and that egotism which begets envy and hatred. Self—the yearning for pleasure and the lust after vanity. Truth is the correct comprehension of things: it is the permanent and everlasting, the real in all existence, the bliss of righteousness.

“The existence of self is an illusion; and there is no wrong in this world, no vice, no sin, except what flows from the assertion of self.

“The attainment of truth is possible only when self is recognised as an illusion.

Righteousness can be practised only when we have freed our mind from the passion of egotism. Perfect peace can dwell only where all vanity has disappeared.

“Blessed is he who has understood the dharma (law).”

As a commentary on this first path the *Four Noble Truths of Buddhism* may be quoted:—

#### THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS OF BUDDHISM

The first noble truth is the existence of sorrow. Birth is sorrowful, growth is sorrowful, illness is sorrowful, and death is sorrowful. Sad it is to be joined with that which we do not like. Sadder still is the separation from that which we love, and painful is the craving for that which cannot be obtained.

The second noble truth is the cause of suffering. The cause of suffering is lust. The surrounding world affects sensation and begets a craving thirst, which clamours for immediate satisfaction. The illusion of self originates and manifests itself in a cleaving to things. The desire to live for the enjoyment of self entangles us in the net of sorrow. Pleasures are the bait, and the result is pain.

The third noble truth is the cessation of sorrow. He who conquers self will be free from lust. He no longer craves, and the flame of desire finds no material to feed upon. Thus it will be extinguished.

The fourth noble truth is the eightfold path that leads to the cessation of sorrow. There is salvation for him whose self disappears before Truth, whose will is bent upon what he ought to do, whose sole desire is the performance of his duty. He who is wise will enter this path and make an end of sorrow.

The Buddha afterwards said :—

“ He who does not see the four noble truths has still a long path to traverse, by repeated births, through the desert of ignorance, with its mirages of illusion, and through the morasses of sin ; ” and

“ There is no painful wound so bad as sorrow—no piercing arrow so sharp as folly. Nothing can remedy these but an earnest attention to religious instruction. From this the blind receive sight, the deluded are enlightened. Men are guided and led by this, as eyes given to him without eyes. This, then, is able to dispel unbelief, to remove



sorrow, to impart joy; the highest wisdom is the lot of those who 'hear.' This is the title of him who has acquired the greatest merit."

"Sorrow" in Buddhism has not the limited meaning that is given to the word in English dictionaries. It does not refer exclusively to grief or lamentation, but is identical with corporeality or transiency, impermanence, unrest, defective persistence or continuity. The Buddhist looks out upon the world and sees there nothing abiding, and so regards all transient things as sorrowful things. Death—which is not the end of all, only of the body, which will be dissolved into its component parts—will come, but, though the individual will pass away, the deeds and, therefore, the sorrow remain. To overcome transiency is to overcome sorrow. The Buddha's grief before He left His home was at the continual change and transiency which He observed in every direction. "I see everywhere," He said, "the impression of change; therefore my heart is heavy. Men grow old, sicken, and die. That is enough to take away the zest of life." In other words: "Wherein

lies the utility of giving oneself up to pleasure and the gratification of desire if the result of the pursuit is only ephemeral. Let us rather devote our energies to seeking the permanent and non-transient."

This teaching has preserved Buddhism from Pessimism—a charge which is, however, sometimes, and unwarrantably, brought against it, for sorrow was not only recognised, but its cause was sought, then the means by which the cessation of sorrow could be achieved, and, finally, the steps toward the realisation of that end were enunciated. They are the steps of the eightfold path.

Buddhism does not accept the doctrine of a metaphysical soul-entity; but, on the other hand, it asserts that life did not commence with birth and will not end at death, but is everlasting, and immortality may be attained.

"He who harbours in his heart love of truth will live and not die, for he has drunk the water of immortality.

"Let no man be single, let every one be wedded in holy love to the truth. And when the destroyer comes to separate the visible from your being, you will continue to live in

the truth, and you will partake of the life everlasting, for the truth is immortal."

Concerning the Buddhistic belief Dr Paul Carus has written: "Buddhism denies the existence of an eternal, immutable Self, but we have seen it proclaims the existence of something eternal. The eternal, however, is not a thing, nor a concrete actuality, nor a material existence, but the omnipresence of those eternal verities which render possible all the ideals that are good and beautiful."

The destruction of the craving of selfishness was characterised by the Buddha as "true deliverance, salvation, heaven, and the bliss of a life immortal."

"And what, O monks, is Right Knowledge? The knowledge of misery, O monks, the knowledge of the origin of misery, the knowledge of the cessation of misery, and the knowledge of the path leading to the cessation of misery—this, O monks, is called Right Knowledge."

Buddhism has frequently been described as a religion of negation, but it is necessary to pull down and clear a site before a new building can be erected in the same place.

The Buddha sought to pull down the old building of evil right to the foundation and erect a new building, with a new foundation, in order that the structure might be a solid one.

Buddhism may very appropriately be called "the religion of knowledge," because it disapproves of and discourages all metaphysical speculation. It, therefore, does not theorise as to the precise character of the after-life existence, regarding such labour as being of no advantage to the great aim of the destruction of desire, selfishness, and delusion. †. "What follows upon the extinction of delusion?" a monk asked the nun Dhammadinnā.

"Abandon the question, brother. I cannot grasp the meaning of the question. If it seems good to thee, go to the Enlightened One, and ask Him for an explanation of the question."

The Buddha's reply was:—

"Wise is Dhammadinnā, and mighty in understanding. Would'st thou ask me for an explanation? I would give thee exactly the same answer."

"Save thyself," said the Buddha on another occasion; "that is the thing of most importance."

Buddhism, also, is not concerned with speculations as to how the world originated, nor as to whether, and how, it will end. The Buddhist is not concerned with investigation, but with living.

Buddhism is essentially intellectual in its tendency, and fears not the progress of science. Although religion is not a matter of intellect alone, yet it may certainly be said that no religion will now stand the test of time unless its tenets can harmonise with ascertained scientific facts.

#### PATH 2

##### *Right Resolutions, Aims, or Aspirations— Right-mindedness*

“What now is Right-mindedness?”

“1. The thought of renouncing worldly ways.

“2. The thought of bearing no ill-will.

“3. The thought of abstaining from cruelty.”

The three evils of the mind are covetousness, hatred, and error.

Having acquired intellectually the knowledge necessary for the attainment of Buddhahood, the aspirant has now to put such knowledge to practice, and the first step is to aspire towards the goal and form the resolutions which shall afterwards be put into practice. There must be no doubt as to the possibility of attaining the end. The right aspiration is elsewhere described as "the longing for renunciation; the hope to live in love with all; the aspiration after true humanity."

This is the preliminary step leading up to the remaining paths which are more representative of activity.

### PATH 3

#### *Right Speech*

"And what, O monks, is Right Speech? To abstain from falsehood, to abstain from backbiting, to abstain from harsh language, to abstain from frivolous talk—this, O monks, is called Right Speech."

The four evils of the tongue are lying, slander, abuse, and idle talk.

The elimination of gossip, all frivolous conversation, harsh language, and backbiting, must also be found in combination with the virtues of kindness, openness, truth, and non-prevarication in speech. Amongst the subjects recommended not to form topics of conversation are—"meats, drinks, clothes, perfumes, women, fortune-telling, ghost stories," in particular, and all idle talk generally.

The Buddha's own definite instructions were to restrain oneself "from evil and abusive words, and an overbearing, insulting disposition towards others, hatred, and resentment, which increase and grow. Restraining one's words and behaving decorously to men, using patience and courtesy, these evil consequences are self destroyed. The future life of a man depends on his words; and, therefore, from evil words comes self-destruction."

#### PATH 4

##### *Right Acts, Conduct, and Behaviour*

Buddhism not only inculcates the abstention from the performance of certain acts, but

recommends the performance of the equivalent good actions in their place. Thus the Buddha transformed religion from selfishness to selflessness. The ascetics of his time, like many of the ascetics of the present day, were seeking to "save their own souls" and find deliverance from the sorrow and misery which encompass humanity and all the evils, death included, which are the unfailing accompaniments of every individual existence, but, at the same time, ignoring the spiritual needs of their fellow-men. Regard for others is one of the characteristics which distinguished the teaching of Gautama from the asceticism which was rife in His earlier days, and which He Himself had at one time practised. To find deliverance for Himself was the object He had in view when He left His father's palace. "I have awakened to the truth," He said, "and I am resolved to accomplish my purpose. I will sever all the ties that bind me to the world, and I will go out from my home to seek the way of salvation." When, however, He obtained enlightenment, His first question was: "To whom shall I preach the doctrine first?" and His only desire then became "to



found the kingdom of truth upon earth, to give light to those who are enshrouded in darkness, and to open the gate of immortality to men." He had reached the goal, and desired that others should do so, particularly that His former companions should hear the noble and grand truth He had discovered. This solicitude for others earned Him the title of "the Great Compassionate One." When the number of disciples and enquirers became too great for individual instruction, He selected some to go forth and expound the law, saying to them: "Go ye now, O monks, for the benefit of many, for the welfare of mankind, out of compassion for the world. Preach the doctrine which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle, and glorious in the end—in the spirit as well as in the letter. There are beings whose eyes are scarcely covered with dust, but if the doctrine is not preached to them they cannot attain salvation. Proclaim to them a life of holiness; they will understand the doctrine and accept it."

In the *Metta Sutta* we read:—

"As the mother, at the risk of her life, watches over her own child—her only child—

so let every one cultivate a boundless, friendly mind towards all beings. Let him cultivate good-will towards all the world—a boundless, friendly mind above, below, and across, unobstructed, without hatred, and without enmity. Standing, walking, sitting, lying, as long as he is awake, let him devote himself to this mind; this way of living is the best in the world."

Dr G. M. Grant has admitted that the disciples of Buddha "imitated him, and propagated the faith with an enthusiasm, self-abnegation, and success which the history of Christendom cannot surpass; and his religion is the only one of the universal religions that never sought to propagate itself by force or persecution, even when it had the power."

"And what, O monks, is Right Conduct? To abstain from destroying life, to abstain from that which is not given one, and to abstain from immorality—this, O monks, is called Right Conduct."

"O lust! I have discovered thy source and origin—born of busy recollections that haunt the mind. Now I will no more think

of thee or these; then thou shalt no longer exist for me. Of the mind alone is lustful desire; from oneself arises the five longings of sense. Haste then to bind these five desires, and prove thyself a hero indeed! Where there is no lust, there is no anxious fear; at quiet, there are no more harrowing cares: for such a one—desire expelled, its trammels for ever cast away. This is, indeed, to find true deliverance."

"At the sight of beauty the heart is at once ensnared, because it considers not the impermanency of all such appearances. The fool, regarding the outward form as an excellency—how can he know the falseness of the thing? for, like a silkworm enveloped in its own cocoon, so is he entangled in his own love of sensual pleasure. But the wise man, able to separate himself and cast off all this, is no longer entangled, but casts away all sorrows. The careless and idle man considers that such indulgence of sense is not contrary to purity, and so, going on still indulging such thoughts, he is bound as a captive in hell; but the wise man, destroying all thoughts about such things, and ever remembering the

impurity of such indulgence, by this means comes out of captivity, and so is able to escape from the grief of repeated old age and death."

"Lust and angry passion are the constant miseries of the world. They are the causes of all the unhappiness which befalls the foolish man. They are the means by which the constant repetition of birth in the different conditions of existence is continued throughout the three worlds. If the sufferings of ages cannot bring men to repentance and amendment, how much less can we expect the fool now to become wise and shake off the poison of this lust and covetous longing, which destroys his body and ruins his family—nay, which destroys and ruins the whole world."

"From love (or lust) comes sorrow, from lust comes fear; where there is no ground for lust, what sorrow, what fear can there be? From pleasure comes sorrow, from pleasure comes fear; where there is no ground for pleasure, what grief or fear can there be? From covetousness comes sorrow, from greed comes fear; where one is free from covetousness

there can be no sorrow or fear. But to be greedy to fulfil perfectly the requirements (moral rules) of the law—to be truthful in everything, to be modest in everything, to order himself according to what is right—that is to lay a foundation of love from all. The idea of pleasure not yet produced, his thoughts and words composed, his mind unaffected by any bewilderment of love, he indeed shall mount above the stream."

The command against intoxicating drinks includes drugs or anything which has an intoxicating effect.

Buddhism not only teaches that we must abstain from certain acts and the thoughts which beget these acts, but that we must perform other acts in their place, and that such acts must include in their object the lessening of suffering in our fellow-men, regarding them as we regard ourselves, feeding the hungry, raising the fallen, and comforting the afflicted.

Men gratify their passions because they are ignorant of, or ignore, the destiny of humanity ; and, although Buddhism does not inculcate the

belief in the existence of a material soul-entity, it teaches that material existence is repeated until selfishness is eradicated, by virtue of the law of Karma.

Karma may be expressed by another word—Consequence—and no other religion teaches in so forcible a manner the truth that "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Every deed, whether good or evil, is followed by its natural and adequate consequence. The only way of escape from the evil consequences of an evil deed is to forsake the deed by eradicating the thought which leads to its performance. Life is looked upon as one perpetual struggle, with the immediate aim and object of uprooting all evil thoughts and desires, and the ultimate aim of attaining Nibbana. As Herr Dahlke has said: "A certain cold earnestness seems to pervade the whole of this teaching. Every deed, every word, every thought is treated, as it were, with the dissecting knife." The task, though severe, is not an impossible one, for the Buddha Himself attained the goal, and sought to reveal the way to others. That was His

limitation. He could only point out the path.

“By ourselves is evil done,  
By ourselves we pain endure ;  
By ourselves we cease from wrong,  
By ourselves become we pure.  
No one saves us but ourselves,  
No one can and no one may ;  
We ourselves must walk the path—  
Buddhas only teach the way.”

“What is life but the flower or the fruit which falls when ripe, but yet which fears the untimely frost? Once born, there is nought but sorrow; for who is there can escape death? From the first moment of conception in the womb, the result of passionate love and desire, there is nought but the bodily form—transitory as the lightning flash. It is difficult to dam up the daily flow of the waters of life. The body is but a thing destined to perish. There is no certain form given to the spirit conceived with the body. Once dead it is again born—the connections of sin and of merit cannot be over-reached. It is not a matter of one life or one death. But from the act of renewed conception proceeds all the consequences of former deeds, resulting in joy

or misery ; the body dies, but the spirit is not entombed !”

“ It is the mind alone that determines the character of life in the three worlds. Just as the life has been virtuous or the contrary is the subsequent career of the individual. Living in the dark, darkness will follow : the consequent birth is as the echo from the cavern ; immersed in carnal desires, there cannot be anything but carnal appetite : all things result from previous conduct, as the traces follow the elephant step, or the shadow the substance.”

“ As when a house roof is not properly secured then the rain finds a way through it and drops within, so when the thoughts are not carefully controlled sexual desires will soon bore through all our good resolutions. But as when a roof is well stopped then the water cannot leak through, so by controlling one's thoughts and acting with reflection no such desires can arise or disturb us.”

In the performance of acts of charity regard must also be paid to the intention—the act must not be performed mainly with the idea of benefiting others, but also with the object of destroying selfishness and attaining Nibbana.



## PATH 5

*Right Way of earning a Livelihood*

The Buddhist, like the Quaker, does not engage in any occupation that is inimical to his fellow-men, or in any occupation that involves the taking of life, whether human or animal. Therefore no Buddhist becomes a soldier, sailor, butcher, fishmonger, or manufacturer of fire-arms or swords. Neither does a Buddhist become a publican. It is, however, necessary for him to have some occupation, however wealthy he may happen to be, that will be of benefit to himself and his fellow-men. The profession or calling is judged by the standard of its utility to humanity generally.

“And now, O monks, what is Right Occupation? Whenever, O monks, a noble disciple, quitting a wrong occupation, gets his livelihood by a right occupation, this, O monks, is called Right Occupation.”

When King Asoka became a follower of the Buddha, he abandoned hunting and all forms of sport which involved the taking of animal life and prohibited flesh diet.

The livelihood must be earned in such a way as to prohibit any suggestion of dishonesty or unfair dealing. Palmistry, divination, astrology, and all such arts are especially mentioned as barred from the aspirant to Nibbana.

"He who is humane does not kill; he is ever able to preserve life. This principle is imperishable; whoever observes it, no calamity shall betide that man. Politeness, indifference to worldly things, hurting no one, without place for annoyance — this is the character of the Brahma heaven. Ever exercising love towards the infirm; pure, according to the teaching of the Buddha; knowing when sufficient has been had; knowing when to stop—this is to escape the recurrence of Birth and Death."

#### PATH 6

##### *Right Efforts or Exertion*

"And what, O monks, is Right Effort? Whenever, O monks, a monk purposes, makes an effort, heroically endeavours, applies his mind, and exerts himself, that evil and demeritorious qualities not yet arisen may not

arise, and that evil and demeritorious qualities already arisen may be abandoned, and that meritorious qualities not yet arisen may arise, and exerts himself for the preservation, retention, growth, increase, development, and perfection of meritorious qualities already arisen — this O monks, is called Right Effort."

The aspirant is recommended not only to apply his mind and efforts towards the realisation of some good efforts, but also to consider the outcome of the correspondingly bad idea if allowed to develop into action, and to analyse the steps which led up to the conception of the idea. He is not recommended to chastise the body or to mortify it by physical penances; the system of Buddhism was a revolt from the Brahminical ascetical practices. The aspirant, however, cannot reach Nibbana unless he puts forth strenuous effort.

An alternative name for this path would be "the path of the cleansing of the mind." The passions must be overcome and sinful thoughts suppressed and existing goodness stimulated and augmented, and goodness not yet manifested must be produced.

## PATH 7

*Right Thought or Contemplation*

The constant effort of Buddhism is to turn from the external to the internal.

“And what, O monks, is Right Contemplation? Whenever, O monks, a monk lives, as respect to the body, observant of the body, strenuous, conscious, contemplative, and has rid himself of lust and grief; as respects sensations, observant of sensations, strenuous; as respects the elements of being, observant of the elements of being, strenuous—this, O monks, is called Right Contemplation.”

We hear much nowadays of thought power, but Buddhism is the most complete and effective system of mind training yet placed before the world. Character is only formed and trained by means of the will, which is obedient to motive; and conduct, with its results, can be transformed by thoughtful regulation of motives. The mind must be purified of evil thoughts and desires in order that evil actions may not be committed, and the

contemplation should be directed towards the non-transient.

“Mind is the master-power that moulds and makes,  
And man is mind, and evermore he takes  
The tool of thought, and, shaping what he wills,  
Brings forth a thousand joys, a thousand ills,—  
He thinks in secret, and it comes to pass ;  
Environment is but his looking-glass.”

“Let a brother, as he dwells in the body, so regard the body that he, being strenuous, thoughtful, and mindful, may, while in this world, overcome the grief which arises from the body's craving.”

“The mind is the origin of all that is : the mind is the master, the mind is the cause. If in the midst of the mind there are evil thoughts, then the words are evil, the deeds are evil, and the sorrow which results from sin follows that man, as the chariot wheel follows him who draws it. The mind is the origin of all that is : it is the mind that commands, it is the mind that contrives. If in the mind there are good thoughts, then the words are good and the deeds good, and the happiness which results from such conduct follows that man, as the shadow accompanies the substance.”

"It is the mind that makes its own dwelling-place; from earliest times, the mind, reflecting on evil ways, itself counts its own misery. It is the very thought that itself makes its sorrow. Not a father or mother can do so much; if only the thoughts be directed to that which is right, then happiness must necessarily follow, concealing the six appetites as the tortoise conceals his limbs, guarding thoughts as a city surrounded by a ditch, then the wise man in his struggle with Mara shall certainly conquer, and free himself from all future misery."

"The man who strives after true wisdom feels no such sorrow (impending death); always reflecting on religion, he forgets himself—possessed of the right apprehension of Truth he increases in wisdom daily, he becomes a light in the world; however born, his happiness is a thousand-fold greater, and in the end he shall escape every evil mode of existence."

"The disciple who is able to hold the precepts firmly, like a wall, difficult to be overturned, surrounds himself with the protection of the law, and thus persevering, perfects himself in saving wisdom. The

disciple, with his mind enlightened, by this enlightenment adds yet to his store of wisdom, and so obtains perfect insight into the mysteries of Truth, and thus illumined, he practises his calling in peace. The disciple able to cast away the causes of sorrow, in perfect rest enjoys happiness, and by virtuously preaching the Law of Eternal Life, himself obtains Nibbana. By hearing, he acquaints himself with the Rules of a Holy Life ; he shakes off doubt and becomes settled in faith. By hearing, he is able to resist all that is contrary to the law, and so advancing, he arrives at the place where there is no more Death."

#### PATH 8

*Right State of a Peaceful Mind—Ecstasy,  
or Meditation.*

The mind, having banished all evil thoughts and desires, ceases to be perturbed and becomes tranquil ; evil thoughts are replaced by a love of truth and righteousness.

Concentration must be single in purpose and persistent, directed towards a virtuous

object. Lust, Anger, Laxness, Restless Brooding, and Doubt, which are called the Five Hindrances, must be cast away, and their place taken by Reasoning, Reflection, Joy, Happiness, and Single Mindedness. There are four "trances" considered under this heading, involving the laws of breathing, and by means of which the Buddhist enters Nibbana.

This final step does not involve arrestment of consciousness, but, on the contrary, it is held that then the consciousness becomes most intensely active, and the power to gain knowledge increased to the utmost limits.

The expression "trance" must not be understood to mean "loss of consciousness," but a perfectly dispassionate condition. Religious ecstasy, or mystical trance, in the sense that these terms are frequently understood by Spiritualists and others, do not enter into Buddhism, and the Buddha strictly prohibited His followers from attempting to put them into practice.

Nor must the aspirant become confident until the whole eight paths have been completely traversed, and everything which



tends to evil eradicated, and the Buddha's caution in this respect reminds one forcibly of the words of the apostle Paul: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." A similar warning was uttered by the Buddha:—

"Rely not too entirely on the advantage of victory, for, though you may prevail in battle, yet there is still sorrow in store; rather should a man seek the rules of self-conquest; having conquered himself, then there will be no further ground for birth."

## BUDDHISM AND GOD

BUDDHISM has nothing to do with theory or speculation, but deals only with facts open to presumptive or positive proof; hence the question of an anthropomorphic Supreme Being does not enter within its philosophy. On this point the Buddha said:—

“Despite all search, I have not found any God; but in this search for God I have found the way to deliverance. Whether there really is a God or no—of that I cannot say anything, of that I do not need to say anything; but, comprehending the true nature of life, I have discovered that salvation is possible without God, altogether apart from God. I can give you salvation from sorrow. Be content with that, and ‘the place of peace serene is open to you.’”

“Who is it that shapes our lives? Is it

Ishvara, a personal creator? If Ishvara be the maker, all living things should have silently to submit to their maker's power. They would be like vessels formed by the potter's hand; and if it were so—how would it be possible to practise virtue? If the world had been made by Ishvara there should be no such thing as sorrow, or calamity, or sin; for both pure and impure deeds must come from him. If not, there would be another cause beside him, and he would not be the self-existent one. Thus, you see, the thought of Ishvara is overthrown."

It is, however, rank injustice to charge Buddhism with being atheistic, for, although the belief in a personal, human-shaped God, with limitations—subject to changes of mind, influence by human beings, and indulging in sentiments of anger and jealousy—is not accepted, there is the belief in a Supreme Power or Law, and many Christians of the present day have now this conception in place of the former anthropomorphic belief. The hypothetical God of the creeds is a permanent, separate entity, some one entirely different

from and outside ourselves; and Buddhism is a constant protest against the principle of separateness.

"It is said that the Absolute has created us. But that which is absolute cannot be a cause. All things around us come from a cause, as the plant comes from the seed; but how can the Absolute be the cause of all things alike? If it pervades them, then certainly it does not make them.

"Again, it is said that Self is the maker. But if Self is the maker, why did he not make things pleasing? The causes of sorrow and joy are real and objective. How can they have been made by Self?

"Again, if you adopt the argument there is no maker, our fate is such as it is, and there is no causation—what use would there be in shaping our lives and adjusting means to an end?

"Therefore, we argue that all things that exist are not without cause. However, neither Ishvara, nor the Absolute, nor the Self, nor causeless Chance, is the maker, but our deeds produce results both good and evil.

"The whole world is under the law of causation, and the causes that act are not unmental, for the gold of which the cup is made is gold throughout. . . . As all things are fixed by causation, let us practice good so that good may result from our actions."

Many think that the ignoring of the God-idea in its limited meaning must necessarily lead to the rejection of any belief in punishment for evil committed— if not, indeed, to a positive disbelief in the possibility of doing evil. But the words of the Buddha upon this point are very emphatic:—

"O ye that commit murders and robberies! The veil of self-delusion covers your eyes. If you could see things as they are, not as they appear, you would no longer inflict injuries and pain on your own selves. You do not see that you will have to atone for your evil deeds, for what you sow, that you will reap."

"Buddhism has no God," said the Bhikku Ānanda Metteya, in an interview the writer had with him, and which was reported in *Light*

for 9th May 1908, "either in the anthropomorphic or spiritistic sense . . . but any human being, by interior development, can rise to any particular place whilst in this life."

## BUDDHISM AND NIBBANA

THE late Colonel H. S. Olcott, one of the founders of the Theosophical Society, who, together with Madame Blavatsky, became a Buddhist, in his *Buddhist Catechism* gave the following definition of Nibbana:—

“A condition of total cessation of changes, of perfect rest; of the absence of desire and illusion and sorrow; of the total obliteration of everything that goes to make up the physical man. Before reaching Nibbana, man is constantly being re-born; when he reaches Nibbana, he is re-born no more.”

The Bhikku Subhadra gave the following definition in a Catechism which he published:—

“Nibbana is a condition of heart and mind in which every earthly craving is extinct; it is the cessation of every passion and desire, of every feeling of ill-will, fear, and sorrow.

It is a mental state of perfect rest and peace and joy, in the steadfast assurance of deliverance attained from all imperfections of finite being. It is a condition impossible to be defined in words, or to be conceived by any one still attached to the things of the world. Only he knows what Nibbana is who has realised it in his own heart."

Nibbana is a condition and not a place. Professor Rhys Davids, in a letter to the *Spectator* of 25th February 1882, pointed out that Nibbana with the Buddhist merely means "the peace of God which passeth human understanding." May we not also add—"and all misunderstanding"?

The term "Nibbana," or "Nirvana," as it is sometimes called, has frequently been asserted to mean total extinction or annihilation—mainly because the meaning of this word in the Sanskrit is "a blowing out," as of a candle; but the going out refers to evil, selfishness, lust, and ignorance, and does not mean "non-existence" in the fullest and most complete sense.

A wrong construction has, also, as frequently, been placed upon a saying attributed to the



Buddha as having been uttered by Him shortly before His death—"The final extinction of the Tathāgata shall take place before long"; but it is clear from the many other statements that when He made that He referred merely to the bodily form. In the same speech He said to His beloved disciple Ānanda: "Have I not formerly declared to you that it is in the very nature of all things near and dear unto us that we must separate from them and leave them? How, then, Ānanda, can it be possible for us to remain, since everything that is born or brought into being, and organised, contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution? How, then, can it be possible that this body of mine should not be destroyed? No such condition can exist! And this mortal existence, O Ānanda, has been relinquished, cast away, renounced, rejected, and abandoned by the Tathāgata."

During His life He made many references to immortality and how it might be secured. The attainment of truth and the destruction of selfish desires are said to be "salvation, heaven, the bliss of life immortal." Again: "The immortal can be reached only by con-

tinuous acts of kindness, and perfection is accomplished by compassion and charity"; and "Death is common to all; yet in this valley of desolation there is a path that leads him who has surrendered all selfishness to immortality."

In another interview with Bhikku Ānanda Metteya, reported in the *Christian Commonwealth* for 13th May 1908, he said:—

"There is a highest state of existence in which individuality is merged, but this state of Nibbana does not imply annihilation as that term is commonly used. Suppose you imagine infinite space as the very substratum of consciousness. There being no differentiation therein, there will not be consciousness in any conception we can draw. Suppose there comes into existence in that infinite space a cube, which will be limited by top and bottom and sides. Infinity will thus be limited as regards expression in the cube. If you destroy the cubeness the form will disappear, and it will cease to limit infinity."

In reply to a question which I put: "But does not Buddhism teach that the highest state of all is extinction of individuality?" he replied:—

"Yes, but not annihilation. We cannot say

what it is positively, and can only make vague analogies. It is possible to rise to a conception of it within one's own consciousness, if one goes the right way about it. The Buddhas are those who after death are not re-born in a human world, but in a higher world."

We upon this mundane plane are conditioned by time and space, but the Buddhistic idea of Nibbana would seem to imply a liberation from these conditions, and continued existence as a spiritual rather than a human personality.

Nibbana is the attainment of the transcendental absolute—a state of complete liberation from ignorance, lust, and desire, and the necessity of re-birth. Man passes from the state of Be-coming into that of Be-ing, from a state of Separateness into one of Unity.

## BUDDHISM AND WOMAN

ONE of the most frequent and reckless statements made by Christian apologists and opponents of Buddhism is that Buddhism demands the subordination of woman. The term "argument" cannot logically be applied to it, because an argument presupposes some substratum of truth to be afterwards demonstrated; but there is no foundation for the assertion made as to the inferior view of women in Buddhism when the acts, and writings of the Buddha are regarded from an unprejudiced and impartial standpoint.

Dr T. Sterling Berry, in his handbook of *Christianity and Buddhism*, says:—

"The absolute subordination of woman was a recognised principle of Buddhism. If Gautama could have had His will, He would have allowed the members of the

Order to have had nothing to do with them."

His conclusions are based, apparently, upon the dialogue in the *Book of the Great Decease*, when Ānanda is said to have approached the Buddha:—

"How are we to conduct ourselves, Lord, with regard to womankind?"

"Don't see them, Ānanda."

"But if we should see them—what are we to do?"

"Keep wide awake, Ānanda."

It is certainly not surprising that more than one writer has seen a touch of humour in this dialogue—or, rather, in the Buddha's replies; but, to regard the matter in a more serious light, there is always the tendency to attach more importance to the letter than to the spirit of the utterances of any great religious teacher, and to isolate one statement from another; and, if we take these expressions in conjunction with those of another discourse on another and a similar occasion, no explanation or toning down is necessary.

"The Bhikkhus came to the Blessed One and asked Him: 'O Tathāgata, our Lord

and Master, what conduct towards women do you prescribe to the shramanas who have left the world?' And the Blessed One said: 'Guard against looking on a woman. If you see a woman, let it be as though you saw her not, and have no conversation with her. If, after all, you must speak with her, let it be with a pure heart, and think to yourself, "I, as a shramana, will live in this sinful world as the spotless leaf of the lotus, unsoiled by the mud in which it grows." If the woman be old, regard her as your mother; if young, as your sister; if very young, as your child. The shramana who looks at a woman as a woman, or touches her as a woman, has broken his vow, and is no longer a disciple of the Shakyamuni. The power of lust is great with men, and is to be feared withal; take, then, the bow of earnest perseverance and the sharp arrow-points of wisdom. Cover your head with the helmet of right thought, and fight with fixed resolve against the five desires. Lust beclouds a man's heart when it is confused with woman's beauty, and the mind is dazed. Better far with red-hot irons bore out both your eyes, than encourage in yourselves

sensual thoughts, or look upon a woman's form with lustful desires. Better fall into the fierce tiger's mouth, or under the sharp knife of the executioner, than to dwell with a woman and excite in yourself lustful thoughts. A woman of the world is anxious to exhibit her form and shape, whether walking, standing, sitting, or sleeping. Even when represented as a picture, she desires to captivate with the charms of her beauty, and thus to rob men of their steadfast heart! How, then, ought you to guard yourselves? By regarding her tears and her smiles as enemies, her stooping form, her hanging arms, and all her disentangled hair as toils designed to entrap man's heart. Therefore, I say, restrain the heart; give it no unbridled licence.'"

No straining of the intellect is necessary to grasp that the Buddha was dealing with generalities, and not with particularities, and no explanation is necessary for the right comprehension of the passage.

The action of the Buddha in leaving His wife and son in pursuit of a so-called selfish desire has often been adversely commented upon. We must, however, remember what

was the custom in India at that time. The philosophical treatises of the Vedas and the oldest Upanishads were regarded as secret teachings, and could only be known by those who had retired from active life and gone to live in the forest; hence the works containing these teachings came to be known as *Forest Books*. The life of an orthodox Brahman passed through four successive stages or *Asramanas*—the first stage, that of youth, was spent in the diligent study of the Vedas; the duties of a householder, that of the married state, would then follow; after a certain number of years the householder would forsake his family and go to serve as a priest in the temple, and when he felt old age coming upon him he would retire altogether from active life and the world, and go to live in the forest and devote his remaining days upon this earth plane to the study of the *Aranyakas* or *Forest Books*. It should be mentioned that in the last case, if he had grandchildren and his wife were so disposed, she might accompany him to the forest.

We have evidence of this custom in the "Dialogue between Father and Son" in the



*Mahābharāta*, as translated by Dr John Muir, where the son asks the question :—

“ Since when the days of mortals end,  
How ought the wise their lives to spend ?  
What course should I, to duty true,  
My sire, from youth to age pursue ? ”

and the father replies :—

“ Begin thy course with study : store  
The mind with holy, Vedic lore ;  
That stage completed, seek a wife,  
And gain the fruit of wedded life,  
A race of sons, by rites to seal,  
When thou are gone, thy spirit's weal ;  
Then light the sacred fires, and bring  
The gods a fitting offering.  
When age draws nigh, the world forsake,  
Thy chosen home the forest make ;  
And there, a calm, ascetic sage,  
A war against thy passions wage,  
That, cleansed from every earthly stain,  
Thou may'st supreme perfection gain.”

Gautama was, therefore, only following out the custom of His country and time in thus leaving His wife and offspring, although anticipating by a number of years the retirement into the desert.

The difficulty alleged to have been experienced by those women who sought to become Bhikkhunis, and the utterances ascribed to the

Buddha on that occasion, are often claimed as foundation for some extravagant statements. We read that it was with the utmost difficulty that the consent of the Blessed One was obtained for the foundation of an Order of Bhikkhunis, and that after the consent was obtained the Buddha remarked to Ānanda that the Good Law would now last only five hundred instead of a thousand years.

If taken in conjunction with the Buddha's utterances on other occasions, I think there is very grave reason for doubting whether these words were ever uttered. We may appreciate the reason why, in view of the condition of Eastern society and manners at that time, every possible obstacle should have been placed in the way of women entering the Order, if only for the purpose of testing their sincerity; and it must be admitted that these aspirants stood the test well. In the then condition of Oriental society there was a grave element of danger, even in the admission of the near relatives of the Tathāgata who formed the first applicants for the Yellow Robe. Women had been admitted without any difficulty as lay-disciples. When Yashas,

the noble youth of Benares, took the Yellow Robe, and the Blessed One, accompanied by His new disciple, went to the home of the latter, his mother and wife heard and understood the doctrine when it was preached to them, and they seem to have declared spontaneously :—

“ We take refuge in the Buddha, our Lord. We take refuge in the doctrine revealed by Him. We take refuge in the Brotherhood which has been founded by Him. May the Blessed One receive us from this day forth while our life lasts as disciples who have taken refuge in Him.”

They were the first women to become lay-disciples of the Buddha.

We find thoughtfulness and solicitude for the feelings of His wife when He paid that well-known visit to His father's house after He had obtained Enlightenment. Noticing the absence of His wife, He, accompanied by two of His disciples, went to the apartments where she was, first warning His disciples not to prevent her should she try to embrace Him, although no member of the Order might touch or be touched by a woman. Falling to the

ground, she held Him by the feet, and then burst into tears. It is a scene too sacred for us to dwell upon, save to point out how great was the Buddha's respect for the one He had chosen for His wife, and how natural was the expression of her feelings.

The same feeling was displayed in the incident of "The Woman at the Well"—Prakriti, a girl of the Matanga caste, whom Ānanda had asked for water, and who had refused to accede to his request on the ground of her lowliness of caste. "I ask not for caste, but for water," said Ānanda, and the Matanga girl's heart leaped joyfully as she gave Ānanda to drink. That act made them equal, and she followed Ānanda at a distance, and, seeking out the Blessed One, she asked permission to dwell in the same place as his disciple and minister to his wants, "for," she said, "I love Ānanda." The Buddha did not chide the girl for the request she had made, but, instead, He directed her thoughts into a higher channel. "Blessed are you, Prakriti, for though you are a Matanga, you will be a model for noblemen and noblewomen. You are of low caste, but Brahmans will learn a lesson from you. Swerve not from

the path of justice and righteousness, and you will outshine the royal glory of queens on the throne."

Did He despise women when He sojourned at the grove of the courtesan Ambāpālī, and when He, by silence, intimated His acceptance of her invitation to eat at her house together with His brethren? It was the last recorded visit paid by Him before His departure from this plane of existence. He accepted the gift she proffered of her mansion for the Order of Bhikkhus. She had profited by the discourse and instruction which fell from the lips of the Blessed One. The Licchavi family, whose invitation He refused in order that He might accept the invitation of the woman, were only "gladdened" by the religious discourse, and their jealousy at His preference was exemplified in the words they uttered: "A wordly woman has outdone us; we have been left behind by a frivolous girl!" That was their estimation; but it differed from the Buddha's, which was:—

"This woman moves in worldly circles, and is a favourite of kings and princes; yet is her heart composed and quieted. Young in years, rich, surrounded by pleasures, she is thoughtful

and steadfast. This, indeed, is rare in the world. Women, as a rule, are scant in wisdom and deeply immersed in vanity; but she, although living in luxury, has acquired the wisdom of a master, taking delight in piety, and is able to receive the truth in its completeness."

If we are, however, to judge of a tree by its fruits, we must try to ascertain what has been the general influence of Buddhism in countries where it has held sway, or where it has been able to make the influence of its teachings felt; and for evidence on this point we have abundant testimony from the adversaries of, or non-believers in, Buddhism, even more than from its advocates and adherents. Ancient India was notorious for its laxity, or, rather, its absence, of morals. Vedic worship was a highly sensual form of religion, and was accompanied by ceremonies indescribable in modern language, either orally or in writing. There was no sacredness in the marriage vow, no home life such as we know it at the present day; but Buddhism, "the religion of self-control and self-culture," as it has not inappropriately been called, gave perfect freedom to woman,

raised her status, and, without the formulation of rigid rules and laws, secured her being treated with respect. There is an abundance of testimony from all sides as to this reformation. Mr W. S. Lilly, the well-known Catholic author, in his work *Many Mansions* says (p. 209) that Buddhism "has raised woman to an elevation never before attained by her in the Oriental world." Sir James George Scott, in *The Burman, His Life and Notions*, points out (p. 133) that "there is no difference between man and woman but that which has been established by superiority of virtue; and hence it is that the state of woman amongst Buddhists is so very much higher than it is amongst Oriental peoples who do not hold the faith. The Burmese woman enjoys many rights which her European sister is now clamouring for."

Even the well-known Spiritualistic writer, Dr J. M. Peebles, while he condemns Gautama for what he calls His "desertion" of His wife and family, speaking as a traveller who has five times encircled the globe, says that "the tone of morality is higher, and the practice of charitable deeds far more prevalent, in Buddhist

than in Christian countries. This," he says, "will be conceded by every unprejudiced traveller, and by every candid and trustworthy foreign resident of Ceylon, Siam, China, and the East."

Bishop Bigandet testifies not only to the general kind-heartedness, chastity, and morality of Buddhists, but also to the ameliorating influence of the system upon women. Their religion ignores caste, and they naturally accept the theory that we are all brothers. Their hearts seem full of tenderness. They carefully look after the sick and the aged. Reverence and love for parents is proverbial in the East.

Even Dr H. G. Underwood, who can scarcely be regarded as an unprejudiced writer, admits that the admission of women into Buddhist nunneries tended materially to raise their position, and the Rev. Adolph Thomas, a German critic of Buddhism, declared that "the moral code of Buddhism has given a purer expression to natural morality."

Moreover, it was not the Buddha or a Buddhist, but a Christian—Saint Gregory of Nazianzen—who wrote: "Fierce is the dragon



and cunning the asp, but woman has the malice of both"; and another Christian saint—Saint Augustine—who asked the question: "Why was woman created at all?" while yet another—Saint Jerome—declared that "Woman is the root of all evil"; and a Father of the Church—Tertullian—apostrophising Woman, said: "Thou art the devil's gate, the betrayer of the tree, the first deserter of the divine law!"

Let us take the words of a Buddhist woman—Mrs M. M. Hlā Oung—as recorded in *Buddhism* for September 1903:—

"Buddhism, and Buddhism alone, has formed the character of the Burmese woman, and has made her life here busy and intellectual. . . . The high standard of morality amongst the Burmese women—a standard the more remarkable when we consider how easily divorce may be obtained—is also due to her religion."

If, as Mr Samuel Laing says in *A Modern Zoroastrian* (p. 110), "There is no better test of the position which either an individual, a class, or a nation holds in the scale of civilisation than the tone which prevails among the men with regard to women," then we must

agree that Buddhism well fulfils that test, the religion which maintains that—

“To support father and mother,  
To cherish wife and child,  
To follow a peaceful calling—  
This is the greatest blessing.”

## BUDDHISM AND DIVORCE

THE Church of Rome and the Church of England hold to a belief in the indissolubility of the marriage tie, but this belief is not peculiar to the decrees of the Christian Church or the teachings of Christianity. It was held by nations and peoples who are regarded as being of low culture—such, for example, as the Papuas of New Guinea, the Veddahs of Ceylon, and the Niassers of Batu, all of whom held that death alone is sufficient to dissolve the marriage bond. Some people have gone even further, and become strict monogamists of the Doctor Promise type portrayed to us by Oliver Goldsmith in the *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and held that even death does not dissolve the bond by leaving the remaining partner free to marry again. That tenet forms one of the articles of belief in a modern sect of Spiritualists known as the Faithists.

It was not, however, until the time of Augustine that any definite rule was formulated, or an authoritative canon of interpretation agreed upon, as regards divorce. It was then decided what were to be the grounds for a legal separation, and that even when such legal separation had been effected, the dissolution of the nuptial bond did not follow; but the doctrine of the absolute indissolubility of marriage was not finally settled before the Council of Trent—that is to say, that although the law released the wedded parties from their mutual and legal obligations, the Church still looked upon them as married, and neither party was free to contract a second union until the death of the other.

Christian opponents of Buddhism have seized hold of the statement that sometimes occurs in works dealing with Buddhism from a biassed or hypercritical standpoint that marriage under the Burmese Law is purely a civil contract, and may at any time be dissolved by mutual consent, or, in certain circumstances, even against the will of one of the parties, and expatiated upon the evils of such a "loose" system. As a general

rule the critics stop there, and do not proceed to examine whether any restrictions are placed upon the granting of a divorce, whether the practice of divorce is common, and whether, when it does take place, the divorcées are received into Burmese society as though they had done nothing out of the common; because, after all, in every country, public opinion is a greater force than religious beliefs and a great power in morals and behaviour everywhere. Buddhism has always realised the fact that no legal or sacerdotal enactment will ever secure the purity of married life any more than a legal or religious ceremony can create love, but that the real binding power will arise from the moral atmosphere surrounding the individual and, therefore, permeating the community. There must be self-training in high ideals, and the realisation of the facts that love is not the caprice of passion, and that life is the purpose, and not the accident, of love.

As a matter of fact the dissolution of the marriage bond is a very infrequent occurrence either in Burma or amongst Buddhists generally. Divorce, also, is practically unknown

among the Singhalese. To quote again from Sir James George Scott, he says in his work:—

“ Divorces are far from being so common as most writers would have us to believe. The warmth of family affection is one of the truest traits of the race, and the Burman is always very kind to his wife, while every girl is taught from her earliest years to look with the highest respect upon man as man, and to defer in all things to his judgment, though she is far more free than the Indian wife. It is a simple matter to blame the Burmese for easy married customs, but the system speedily puts an end to unhappy and ill-assorted unions, and illegitimate children are exceedingly rare. Finally, unless there is good known cause for a separation, the divorced parties are not, by any means, looked upon with a favourable eye. The man who enters a monastery to get rid of a wife is known by the contemptuous name of ‘taw-twit,’ or ‘jungle runaway,’ for the rest of his life, while the divorcée is a perennial subject of joke to the jester in the play—

“ ‘ She that is neither maid, married, nor widow,  
Fits all men as a pot does its lid, O ’ ”

The purity of home life and the chastity of women are not secured by imprisoning women in zenanas or harems, in accordance with the Hindu and Moslem customs, and the early marriages so common amongst Hindus are discountenanced and rarely practised by Buddhists. Nor do we find perpetrated in Buddhist countries the unhappy scenes which are, unfortunately, too common in the streets of Christian countries.

It is not difficult to assign a reason for this. It is found in the teachings of the Buddha, wherein action is placed on a higher pedestal than mere knowledge, and where science even, the study of which is by no means deprecated, but rather encouraged, is subordinate to virtue. The great aim of Buddhism is the attainment of Nibbana, and this is dependent upon the exertions of the individual, and not upon ultimate reward from a divine person.

Buddhism teaches that lust and ignorance are the two great causes of the misery of life, and that efforts and aims should be directed towards the suppression, or, rather, the eradication, of lust and the removal of ignorance.

At its inception Buddhism revolted against the depraved social conditions which were then existing, but it did not travel to the extremity of the opposite direction. The good effected by many of the world's reformers has too often not been an unmixed blessing, if it has not sometimes resulted in evil, because the leaders, in their fervour and enthusiasm, have temporarily checked one evil by advocating an extreme opposite which has not resulted in permanent benefit. The Buddha adopted a middle course, and did not seek to purify the home either by the institution of a marriage bond as a sacrament or as irrevocable, or the general adoption of absolute continence or celibacy. What the position of women under Brahmanism was may be gathered from the "Adiparva" of the *Mahābharāta* :—

"Women were formerly not immured within houses and dependent upon husbands and other relatives. They used to go about freely, enjoying as they liked best. They did not then adhere to their husbands faithfully; and yet they were not regarded sinful, for that was the sanctioned usage of the times."

Buddhism, however, notwithstanding this,



accorded perfect freedom to the woman, and, like ancient Judaism, did not regard marriage as being anything more than a civil contract.

What, then, are the conditions upon which, according to Buddhistic law and usage, divorces may be sought for and obtained? First, there is no such thing in Buddhism as *ex parte* divorce or divorce at mere caprice or humour. Where there is not mutual consent there must be some ground recognised by the Damathats. The mere volition of one of the parties is not sufficient. It has been upheld by the Burmese Courts that the mere sending of a written intimation to the wife of an intention to divorce her does not make the act legal or binding. Under Jewish law the husband could put away the wife by simply handing her what is termed a "get," or "bill of divorcement," as laid down in Deut. xxiv. 1, 2; and the great Jewish commentator, Hillel, maintained that the husband need not assign any reason whatever for his act, and that he might, if he so pleased, divorce his wife for spoiling his food. At one time the only particulars necessary to be inserted on the document were the date, the

names of the parties, and the words: "Thou art now free for any man."

In the case of Buddhistic divorce by mutual agreement or consent—a practice allowed, but seldom resorted to—each party is entitled to take away his or her separate property, and the joint property is divided equally between them. If there are children of the marriage, the father is entitled to the guardianship of the sons if they are over seven years of age, but the mother retains the guardianship of the daughters whatever their ages may be, and that of the sons if they are under seven; and here, as indeed throughout, we must admit the justice of the Buddhistic law. We do not find that Buddhistic law is "full of inconsistencies, anomalies, and inequalities, amounting almost to absurdities" (to quote Sir Gorell Barnes), as the English law is. When there is a divorce by mutual consent, the parties must either go to the courts and have the marriage rescinded by the judges, or each at the same time sign a deed of separation in the presence of witnesses specially called together for the purpose—no easy matter considering the disfavour with which mutually-arranged divorces are regarded

amongst Buddhists. Three years' mutual separation will, however, by the act itself, effect a divorce. A wife may leave her husband, if she is strong-minded enough to face public opinion; and if for the space of one year he does not maintain her, even though she may have left him of her own free-will, they have each then the right to marry again, though if the husband leaves the wife and fails to support her, both husband and wife have to wait for a period of three years before they are at liberty to contract another marriage. In Scotland (not in England, Wales, or Ireland) desertion by either party for the period of one year is regarded as sufficient ground for the dissolution of the marriage bond. Until 1857, in England a husband was unable to obtain a divorce except by a private act of Parliament, and even at the present day this is the only means by which parties domiciled in Ireland can obtain a dissolution of their marriage. The Matrimonial Causes Act, passed in 1857, does not apply to Ireland.

Should one party, and not the other, desire a separation, a divorce may be obtained by going to the court, when both parties must be

present, or witnesses may be called together and the deed signed in their presence, but in that case, unless a sufficient cause for the separation can be established, the one that sues for the divorce can only claim his or her own separate property, and the remainder of the property, as well as the custody of all the children, remains with the unwilling husband or wife, save that the wife, desiring a divorce against the will of her husband, may take away her spinning-loom with any unfinished work she may have on hand. No divorce is granted to a husband on the ground that he has ceased to love his wife if she opposes the separation.

A woman may obtain a divorce for any one or more of various reasons—if her husband has not sufficient means to support her, if he is suffering from any continuous complaint or disease, if he becomes a lunatic, if he prefers to live an idle life and will not work, if he is faithless, or if he becomes a cripple after marriage. Contrast with these provisions of Buddhistic law the decree of the Spanish Council of Elvira in the year 306 A.D.—that the woman who puts away a guilty husband and marries another shall be excommunicated ;

and, save in case of mortal sickness, she shall not be admitted again to Communion until after her first husband's death.

The reasons for which a husband may be granted a divorce are fewer in number. It is only obtainable by him if it can be proved that his wife is of loose character, or has lost all love for her husband, or has become a leper, or if the marriage should be a childless one, or, in the case of kings only, if there should be a failure of male heirs to the throne. The Council of Arles, in the year 314 A.D., decreed that the husband who put away a guilty wife was to be "advised" not to marry again during her lifetime—a command which reads strangely in comparison with the decree of the Council of Elvira in respect to the case of the guilty husband.

The Buddhistic law of divorce bears a strong resemblance to the laws of Confucius, save that the Chinese Sage, in addition to the causes here enumerated, allowed the husband to divorce his wife if she was not sufficiently attentive or courteous to his parents, or if she happened to be talkative or jealous. Under the Chinese law the wife was barred from

suing for a divorce for any other reason than that of her husband's desertion. Her only remedy—and that was only allowed if she suffered insults from her husband's parents—was to go home to her own mother or father, reclaim the dowry that had been given her husband on her marriage, and demand maintenance from him.

Under Buddhism the unfaithful wife forfeits any right to a share in her husband's property, and if her guilt is proved the husband has the right, if he wishes to exercise it, of expelling her from the house with only a single garment, he retaining the custody of all the children and the possession of her own property in addition to his own.

If it shall be proved that the husband has grossly and cruelly ill-treated and oppressed his wife, she may call him before the court, when he shall be required to sign an agreement in the presence of witnesses, undertaking to treat her well in the future. If he refuses to do this, or if he breaks the bond he has given, she is entitled to a divorce; but in such a case he must leave with the single garment, and the wife retains all the property in

her possession and the custody of all the children.

If the husband degenerates into a persistent and confirmed drunkard, gambler, opium-smoker or libertine, he may be called upon to sign a deed in court, or at home in the presence of witnesses, undertaking to abandon his evil habits. He is allowed three attempts at reform, and if he fails to keep the third promise, the wife, *ipso facto*, becomes entitled to a divorce, but he may claim his own separate property and the custody of the sons.

Leprosy, insanity, or any incurable disease, are only regarded as sufficient grounds for divorce if the disease is discovered after marriage; if either party enters upon the marriage with a knowledge of the existence of such infirmity, there is no ground for claiming legal separation.

This, summarised, is the Buddhist law of divorce, and experience has proved that no danger exists to the community in this comparative laxity, but rather that the Buddhist law tends towards the display of greater affection, and binds the husband and wife more closely together, in order that no occasion may be

given for excuse or reason for dissolving the tie. It must not be overlooked that one of the five fundamental rules of moral conduct, binding upon every Buddhist, is that which reads: "Commit not adultery."

"Two joys there are, disciples," said the Buddha. "What two? The joy of family life and the joy of homeless life," referring in the latter phrase to the life of the monk.

And again the Buddha said:—

"This body is but the prison-house of disease and of the pains of old age and death. To delight in pleasure and to be greedy of self-indulgence is but to increase the load of sin, forgetting the great change that must come and the inconstancy of human life."

Buddhism recognises no material sacrifice, but enjoins the continual sacrifice or curbing of passion and desire—an inward and not an external act, and one that does not demand or depend upon priestly mediation.



## BUDDHISM AS A PRACTICAL RELIGION

BUDDHISM is frequently assumed and asserted to be a system of religion founded by Gautama Siddhartha, in connection with whose life many legends and myths have arisen, a fate almost inevitable to every religious teacher and reformer. Instead of being the founder of Buddhism, Gautama was the last of the Buddhas. To become a Buddha is to arrive at an ideal condition of intellectual and ethical perfection or completion, and the name Siddhartha means "he who has accomplished his purpose." In his discourse Gautama referred to Buddhas that had preceded him, and preached precisely the same doctrines, and the utmost that can be claimed for him in this respect is that he organised or systematised the law or Dharma, and, gathering together the scattered fragments, made them into a concrete whole. One of the

claims of Buddhism is that man can attain to the ideal condition by purely natural means; and one great difference between Buddhism and other religious systems lies in the absence of the supernatural element. Gautama was no divine personage, using the term "divinity" with the forced meaning frequently given to it at the present day. In the work that He accomplished He has placed the whole of the human race under a deep debt of gratitude, and the title of "The Blessed One" or "The Lord," given to Him by Buddhists, is by no means exaggerated or misplaced.

When the Buddha preached His first sermon in the deer park at Benares to those five dwellers of the forest, it is doubtful if He had any prophetic knowledge of the ultimate results of His mission. Brahmanism had become hidden in rites and ceremonies, which, however helpful they may have been in their esoteric meaning, had, nevertheless, taken a material hold upon the population. When, too, we read of Buddhistic praying-wheels and other practices, sometimes designated as superstitious, it should be remembered that though they who indulge in such practices may be

Buddhists, the practices themselves are not Buddhistic, just as one can imagine a Quaker looking upon the ornate ritual of a Catholic High Mass and remarking: "Well, these worshippers may be Christians, but this is not Christianity." Development has marked the history of every religious system, and development does not tend towards simplicity. In fact, the developments in a religious system may be regarded in much the same light as cancers and tumours in the human organism: they are not only useless, but they are inimical, and their tendency is to destroy health. With regard to praying-wheels, it is only necessary to remember that prayer, in the generally-accepted meaning, has no place in Buddhism, which teaches that:—

"Rituals have no efficacy; prayers are vain repetitions; and incantations have no saving power. But to abandon covetousness and lust, to become free from evil passions, and to give up all hatred and ill-will—that is the right sacrifice and the true worship."

There are various schools of thought and many sects in Buddhism, even as in Christianity and Islam, though on the point of the number

of such divisions the oldest religion will bear a favourable comparison, and whatever may be the school or sect, all agree that the way to the attainment of Truth is in contemplation of the four great truths and the pursuit of the noble eight-fold path.

Is Buddhism a religion? If by that term we mean a system of thought and practice that leads man to God, and if by the expression "God" we mean an anthropomorphic being, then Buddhism is not a religion; but if by the term "religion" we mean something that will lift man above the evils, sorrows, cares, and troubles of this mundane life on to a higher plane, then Buddhism can take its place, and a very high one, among the religions of the world.

What is the aim of Buddhism? It is identical with that of every religious system yet propagated—to free humanity from sorrow and suffering—and the means it claims to achieve this is by the annihilation of all selfish cravings and desires. The Buddha's first sermon went to the root of evil, and the system He taught has been described by a Christian commentator as "a purely ethical ideal, which has never been surpassed."

Professor Poussin describes the success of the Buddha as being due to His personal magnetism, but this explanation is not sufficient to account for the success of Buddhism, not only during His lifetime, but during the twenty-four or twenty-five centuries since He died. He emphasised the inner rather than the external side of morality, and though He found it necessary to lay down rules for the conduct of life, He was careful to point out that these should be discarded at any time when found expedient. The essential difference between Buddhism and other faiths lies in the fact that, whereas religious systems generally are based upon external ceremonies and observance of a code of laws, Buddhism probes direct to the root of evil or sin, and, finding the cause within the individual, seeks to banish the effects by eradicating the cause. Even His statements respecting what He believed to be the truth were never intended to be blindly accepted. He held it to be the duty of every man to ascertain the truth for himself:—

“Dwell as lamps unto yourselves, refuges to yourselves, having none else for a refuge ;

lamps of religion, religious refuges, having no one else for a refuge."

"You must trust to yourselves. You can take nothing from me. You must be righteous through your own efforts. You have to depend upon yourselves for the final getting rid of selfishness, and hence of suffering."

Buddhism declares that man attains to immortality by filling the mind with truth, by cleansing the life from sin, and that there is no other way of attaining Truth. It proclaims the law of retribution, and holds that the state of man after death is determined by his deeds in this life. Man is held to be his own saviour, and Gautama never taught men to rely upon Him for salvation. Buddhism has an influence upon life in all its aspects—commercial, social, and individual. It is not a religion which can be reserved for practice on one day of the week, and the harvest is reaped in accordance with the seed sown now.

"Deeds, like a shadow, ne'er depart ;  
Bad deeds can never be concealed ;  
Good deeds cannot be lost, and will  
In all their glory be revealed."

But for a deed to be accounted "good" it

must have its origin in a pure, untainted source. It is not "good" if it is performed as a kind of atonement for previous bad deeds, as a salve for the conscience when tingling from remorse; it must be the spontaneous, outward evidence of inward regnant purity.

"Commit no wrong, but good deeds do,  
*And let thy heart be pure,*  
All Buddhas teach this doctrine true,  
Which will for aye endure."

The extortioner or oppressor cannot gain peace by bequeathing a fortune to the oppressed; nor can the profligate atone for his misdeeds by endowing a home for the uplifting of the fallen. Each has also to travel the path that leads to perfect freedom, and, therefore, perfect happiness, in a solitary manner. He may be guided as to the right way by those who have travelled before him, and he may benefit by the instruction given him, but, as there is no royal road to learning, so there is no short cut to happiness by substitution.

One writer has discoursed upon "the silence of Buddha," which he regards as being as eloquent as His discourses, but He was never

silent upon any practical matters. He never failed to give instruction and counsel when such would help the enquirer to attain Nibbana. He was silent towards the over-curious who plied him with metaphysical questions, and he upbraided the metaphysicians for their jugglery with words. He refuted the idea that all such questions could be brought to the level of a simple "yes" or "no" as answer. His silence when such questions were asked implied that while these matters were being discussed and an attempt made to determine them the path to peace would never be entered upon. The goal at which He aimed and also sought to lead His disciples was knowledge, not metaphysical speculation; and that the lesson was well taught and learned is instanced in the anecdote preserved of the conversation between King Pasenadi of Kosala and the nun Khoma. The Buddhist commentators do not appear always to have learned the lesson so well, for they have wrangled long and discussed often, not upon what the answers of the Buddha and the nun might have been had they replied, but as to whether their silence is to be ascribed to ignorance or fear of



alienating their followers by the answers they could have given had they chosen to do so. The Buddha, however, never failed to give a reason or an answer to a question whenever such information was likely to be of practical benefit.

When He was appealed to on behalf of Kisogotami, who had given way to excessive grief over the loss of a beloved child, and had clasped the dead child to her bosom and gone from house to house asking for medicine that would restore the child to life, He at once consented to restore the child if some mustard seed could be brought to Him from a house or family that had never known the sorrowful experience of death. This, of course, was impossible, and the result was an eloquent discourse from the Buddha upon the impermanence of all things, to the consolation of the mother, and it resulted in her admission as a disciple of the Great Teacher.

Buddhism is progressive in its teachings, and adaptable to every stage of human development. It fears not the advance of science, for it has no dogmas which can be negated by any scientific theory or experiment and in

one tenet at least—that of the impermanence of matter—it has anticipated science. It has ever been the founder of education, of the sciences and the arts. Asoka and other Buddhist kings established public hospitals in the cities of India, and schools of medicine in connection therewith. Professor Hall Chamberlain, in his work *Things Japanese* says:—

“All education was for centuries in Buddhist hands, as was the care of the poor and sick. Buddhism introduced art, introduced medicine, moulded the folklore of the country, created the dramatic poetry, deeply influenced politics and every sphere of social and intellectual activity. In a word, Buddhism was the teacher under whose instruction the Japanese nation grew up.”

Several other independent witnesses might be produced to bear testimony to Buddhism and its salutary influence—the religion which displaces self-constituted authority for reason—for it is essentially a rationalistic, and not a superstitious, religion, and its main teaching may be described as self-development through self-surrender.

If religion is a system of thought mainly concerned with a future existence, then again Buddhism is not a religion, for it is mainly concerned with the present, though at the same time it affirms the persistence or continuity of life. It might be said that the Buddhist lives not in the past, present, or future, but in eternity, and, as one writer has said :—

“ Its goal is to find a refuge for man from the miseries of the world in the safe haven of an intellectual and ethical life through self-conquest and self-culture.”

Buddhism claims to be based upon facts, and not upon theories. It does not despise “faith,” but, on the contrary, enjoins it; but “faith” in Buddhism is the assurance that Truth will ultimately be found and prevail, and does not mean a blind, unquestioning acceptance of illogical dogma. There is nothing hidden or secret in Buddhism, and the expression “Esoteric Buddhism” is inconsistent. It is essentially a missionary religion, but in the propagation of its tenets it has not depended upon armaments. Its rapidity of growth in countries where it

established itself excited the wonder of Professor Max Müller. Nor has persecution ever been a feature of the religion which breathes a spirit of generosity and compassion for all beings, forbears to kill animals for food or "pleasure," and has abolished sacrifice.

"What love can a man possess who believes that the destruction of life will atone for evil deeds? Can a new wrong expiate old wrongs? And can the slaughter of an innocent victim take away the sins of mankind? This is practising religion by the neglect of moral conduct."

"Purify your hearts and cease to kill—that is true religion."

And there is nothing in Buddhism contrary to the spirit of the words of another great teacher who declared that:—

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

## THE THREE GUIDES

The three "Guides" of the Buddhist are :—

1. I follow the Buddha as my guide.
2. I follow the Doctrine of Enlightenment as my guide.
3. I follow the Brotherhood as my guide.

The five Vows taken by the Buddhist are :—

1. I vow not to take the life of any man or animal.
2. I vow not to steal.
3. I vow not to commit unlawful sexual intercourse.
4. I vow not to lie.
5. I vow not to take intoxicants and narcotics.

The ten Vows taken by a Buddhist monk are :—

1. I take the vow not to destroy life.
2. I take the vow not to steal.
3. I take the vow to abstain from impurity.
4. I take the vow not to lie.

5. I take the vow to abstain from intoxicating drinks, which hinder progress and virtue.
6. I take the vow not to eat at forbidden times.
7. I take the vow to abstain from dancing, singing, music, and stage plays.
8. I take the vow not to use garlands, scents, unguents, or ointments.
9. I take the vow not to use a high or a broad bed.
10. I take the vow not to receive gold or silver.

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