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This 1889 book derives from a series of lectures given in 1888 by Monier Monier-Williams, who was Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford for over 30 years and whose work broke new ground in the Western understanding of Buddhism and other South Asian religions. It is a substantial historical survey of Buddhism from its origins in India to its later development further afield. Monier-Williams gives an account of the Buddha and his earliest teaching, as well as a brief description of the origin and composition of the scriptures containing the Buddha's law (Dharma). He explains the early constitution of the Buddha's order of monks (Sangha), and outlines the philosophical doctrines of Buddhism together with its code of morality and theory of perfection, culminating in Nirvana. He also describes formal and popular rituals and practices, and sacred places and objects. The book is an important example of Victorian Orientalist scholarship, and provides an insight into Western attempts at intellectual engagement with the philosophy and culture of the 'colonies' which is still of interest to historians of religious studies, Orientalism, and the British Empire.

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Buddhism

*In its Connexion with Brahmanism and
Hinduism and in its Contrast with Christianity*

MONIER MONIER-WILLIAMS



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B U D D H I S M .

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BRASS IMAGE OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA FROM CEYLON.

He is seated on the Mucalinda Serpent (see p. 480), in an attitude of profound meditation, with eyes half closed, and five rays of light emerging from the crown of his head.

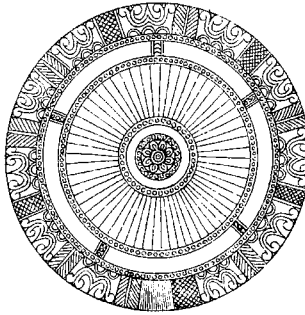
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B U D D H I S M,
IN ITS CONNEXION WITH BRĀHMANISM
AND HINDŪISM,
AND
IN ITS CONTRAST WITH
CHRISTIANITY,

BY

SIR MONIER MONIER-WILLIAMS, K.C.I.E.,

M.A., HON. D.C.L. OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, HON. LL.D. OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALCUTTA, HON. PH.D. OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GÖTTINGEN, HON. MEMBER OF
THE ASIATIC SOCIETIES OF BENGAL AND BOMBAY, AND OF THE ORIENTAL
AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETIES OF AMERICA, BODEN PROFESSOR
OF SANSKRIT, AND LATE FELLOW OF BALLIOL
COLLEGE, OXFORD, ETC.



LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1889.

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PREFACE.

THE ‘Duff Lectures’ for 1888 were delivered by me at Edinburgh in the month of March. In introducing my subject, I spoke to the following effect :—

‘I wish to express my deep sense of the responsibility which the writing of these Lectures has laid upon me, and my earnest desire that they may, by their usefulness, prove in some degree worthy of the great missionary whose name they bear.

‘Dr. Duff was a man of power, who left his own foot-print so deeply impressed on the soil of Bengal, that its traces are never likely to be effaced, and still serve to encourage less ardent spirits, who are striving to imitate his example in the same field of labour.

‘But not only is the impress of his vigorous personality still fresh in Bengal. He has earned an enduring reputation throughout India and the United Kingdom, as the prince of educational missionaries. He was in all that he undertook an enthusiastic and indefatigable workman, of whom, if of any human being, it might be truly said, that, when called upon to quit the sphere of his labours, “he needed not to be ashamed.” No one can have travelled much in India

without having observed how wonderfully the results of his indomitable energy and fervid eloquence in the cause of Truth wait on the memory of his work everywhere. Monuments may be erected and lectureships founded to perpetuate his name and testify to his victories over difficulties which few other men could have overcome, but better than these will be the living testimony of successive generations of Hindū men and women, whose growth and progress in true enlightenment will be due to the seed which he planted, and to which God has given the increase.'

I said a few more words expressive of my hope that the 'Life of Dr. Duff'¹ would be read and pondered by every student destined for work of any kind in our Indian empire, and to that biography I refer all who are unacquainted with the particulars of the labours of a man to whom Scotland has assigned a place in the foremost rank of her most eminent Evangelists.

I now proceed to explain the process by which these Lectures have gradually outgrown the limits required by the Duff Trustees.

When I addressed myself to the carrying out of their wishes—communicated to me by Mr. W. Pirie Duff—I had no intention of undertaking more than a concise account of a subject which I had been studying for many years. I conceived it possible to compress into

¹ 'Life of Alexander Duff, D.D., LL.D., by George Smith, C.I.E., LL.D.' London: Hodder and Stoughton; published first in 1879, and a popular edition in 1881.

six Lectures a scholarly sketch of what may be called true Buddhism,—that is, the Buddhism of the Piṭakas or Pāli texts which are now being edited by the Pāli Text Society, and some of which have been translated in the ‘Sacred Books of the East.’ It soon, however, became apparent to me that to write an account of Buddhism which would be worthy of the great Indian missionary, I ought to exhibit it in its connexion with Brāhmanism and Hindūism and even with Jainism, and in its contrast with Christianity. Then, as I proceeded, I began to feel that to do justice to my subject I should be compelled to enlarge the range of my researches, so as to embrace some of the later phases and modern developments of Buddhism. This led me to undertake a more careful study of Koeppen’s Lamaismus than I had before thought necessary. Furthermore, I felt it my duty to study attentively numerous treatises on Northern Buddhism, which I had before read in a cursory manner. I even thought it incumbent on me to look a little into the Tibetan language, of which I was before wholly ignorant.

I need scarcely explain further the process of expansion through which the present work has passed. A conviction took possession of my mind, that any endeavour to give even an outline of the whole subject of Buddhism in six Lectures, would be rather like the effort of a foolish man trying to paint a panorama of London on a sheet of note-paper. Hence the expansion of six Lectures into eighteen, and it will be seen at

once that many of these eighteen are far too long to have been delivered *in extenso*. In point of fact, by an arrangement with the Trustees, only a certain portion of any Lecture was delivered orally. The present work is rather a treatise on Buddhism printed and published in memory of Dr. Duff.

I need not encumber the Preface with a re-statement of the reasons which have made the elucidation of an intricate subject almost hopelessly difficult. They have been stated in the Introductory Lecture (pp. 13, 14).

Moreover the plan of the present volume has been there set forth (see p. 17).

I may possibly be asked by weary readers why I have ventured to add another tributary to the too swollen stream of treatises on Buddhism? or some may employ another metaphor and inquire why I have troubled myself to toil and plod over a path already well travelled over and trodden down? My reply is that I think I can claim for my own work an individuality which separates it from that of others—an individuality which may probably commend it to thoughtful students of Buddhism as helping to clear a thorny road, and introduce some little order and coherence into the chaotic confusion of Buddhistic ideas.

At any rate I request permission to draw attention to the following points, which, I think, may invest my researches with a distinctive character of their own.

In the first place I have been able to avail myself of

the latest publications of the Pāli Text Society, and to consult many recent works which previous writers on Buddhism have not had at their command.

Secondly, I have striven to combine scientific accuracy with a popular exposition sufficiently readable to satisfy the wants of the cultured English-speaking world—a world crowded with intelligent readers who take an increasing interest in Buddhism, and yet know nothing of Sanskrit, Pāli, and Tibetan.

Thirdly, I have aimed at effecting what no other English Orientalist has, to my knowledge, ever accomplished. I have endeavoured to deal with a complex subject as a whole, and to present in one volume a comprehensive survey of the entire range of Buddhism, from its earliest origin in India to its latest modern developments in other Asiatic countries.

Fourthly, I have brought to the study of Buddhism and its sacred language Pāli, a life-long preparatory study of Brāhmanism and its sacred language Sanskrit.

Fifthly, I have on three occasions travelled through the sacred land of Buddhism (p. 21), and have carried on my investigations personally in the place of its origin, as well as in Ceylon and on the borders of Tibet.

Lastly, I have depicted Buddhism from the standpoint of a believer in Christianity, who has shown, by his other works on Eastern religions, an earnest desire to give them credit for all the good they contain.

In regard to this last point, I shall probably be told

by some enthusiastic admirers of Buddhism, that my prepossessions and predilections—inherited with my Christianity—have, in spite of my desire to be just, distorted my view of a system with which I have no sympathy. To this I can only reply, that my consciousness of my own prepossessions has made me the more sensitively anxious to exhibit Buddhism under its best aspects, as well as under its worst. An attentive perusal of my last Lecture (see p. 537) will, I hope, make it evident that I have at least done everything in my power to dismiss all prejudice from my mind, and to assume and maintain the attitude of an impartial judge. And to this end I have taken nothing on trust, or at second hand. I have studied Pāli, as I have the other Indian Prākritis, on my own account, and independently. I have not accepted unreservedly any man's interpretation of the original Buddhist texts, and have endeavoured to verify for myself all doubtful statements and translations which occur in existing treatises. Of course I owe much to modern Pāli scholars, and writers on Buddhism, and to the translators of the 'Sacred Books of the East ;' but I have frequently felt compelled to form an independent opinion of my own.

The translations given in the 'Sacred Books of the East'—good as they generally are—have seemed to me occasionally misleading. I may mention as an instance the constant employment by the translators of the word 'Ordination' for the ceremonies of admission to the Buddhist monkhood (see pp. 76–80 of the

present volume). I have ventured in such instances to give what has appeared to me a more suitable equivalent for the Pāli. On the same principle I have avoided all needless employment of Christian terminology and Bible-language to express Buddhist ideas.

For example, I have in most cases excluded such words as 'sin,' 'holiness,' 'faith,' 'trinity,' 'priest' from my explanations of the Buddhist creed, as wholly unsuitable.

I regret that want of space has compelled me to curtail my observations on Jainism—the present representative of Buddhistic doctrines in India (see p. 529.) I hope to enter more fully on this subject hereafter.

The names of authors to whom students of Buddhism are indebted are given in my first Lecture (pp. 14, 15). We all owe much to Childers. My own thanks are specially due to General Sir Alexander Cunningham, to Professor E. B. Cowell of Cambridge, Professor Rhys Davids, Dr. Oldenberg, Dr. Rost, Dr. Morris, Dr. Wenzel, who have aided me with their opinions, whenever I have thought it right to consult them. Dr. Rost, C.I.E., of the India Office, is also entitled to my warmest acknowledgments for having placed at my disposal various subsidiary works bearing on Buddhism, some of which belong to his own Library.

My obligations to Mr. Hoey's translation of Dr. Oldenberg's 'Buddha,' to the translations of the travels of the Chinese pilgrims by Professor Legge, Mr. Beal, M. Abel Rémusat, and M. Stanislas Julien, to M. Huc's

travels, and to Mr. Scott's 'Burman,' will be evident, and have been generally acknowledged in my notes. I am particularly grateful to Mr. Sarat Chandra Dās, C.I.E., for the information contained in his Report and for the instruction which I received from him personally while prosecuting my inquiries at Dārjiling.

I have felt compelled to abbreviate nearly all my quotations, and therefore occasionally to alter the phraseology. Hence I have thought it right to mark them by a different type without inverted commas.

With regard to transliteration I must refer the student to the rules for pronunciation given at p. xxxi. They conform to the rules given in my Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary. Like Dr. Oldenberg, I have preferred to substitute Sanskrit terminations in *a* for the Pāli *o*. In Tibetan I have constantly consulted Jäschke, but have not followed his system of transliteration.

In conclusion, I may fitly draw attention to the engravings of objects, some of which were brought by myself from Buddhist countries. They are described in the list of illustrations (see p. xxix), and will, I trust, give value to the present volume. It has seemed to me a duty to make use of every available appliance for throwing light on the obscurities of a difficult subject; and, as these Lectures embrace the whole range of Buddhism, I have adopted as a frontispiece a portrait of Buddha which exhibits Buddhism in its receptivity and in its readiness to adopt serpent-worship, or any other superstition of the races which it strove to convert.

On the other hand, the Wheel, with the Tri-ratna and the Lotus (pp. 521, 522), is engraved on the title-page as the best representative symbol of early Buddhism. It is taken from a Buddhist sculpture at Amarāvati engraved for Mr. Fergusson's 'Tree and Serpent-worship' (p. 237).

The portrait which faces page 74 is well worthy of attention as illustrating the connexion¹ between Bud-

¹ A reference to pages 74, 226, 232 of the following Lectures will make the connexion which I wish to illustrate clearer. In many images of the Buddha the robe is drawn over both shoulders, as in the portrait of the living Sannyāsi. Then mark other particulars in the portrait:—e.g. the Rudrāksha rosary round the neck (see 'Brāhmanism and Hindūism,' p. 67). Then in front of the raised seat of the Sannyāsi are certain ceremonial implements. First, observe the Kamaṇḍalu, or water-gourd, near the right hand corner of the seat. Next, in front of the seat, on the right hand of the figure, is the Upa-pātra—a subsidiary vessel to be used with the Kamaṇḍalu. Then, in the middle, is the Tāmra-pātra or copper vessel, and on the left the Pañca-pātra with the Ācamanī (see 'Brāhmanism and Hindūism,' pp. 401, 402). Near the left hand corner of the seat are the wooden clogs. Finally, there is the Daṇḍa or staff held in the left hand, and used by a Sannyāsi as a defence against evil spirits, much as the Dorje (or Vajra) is used by Northern Buddhist monks (see p. 323 of the present volume). This mystical staff is a bambu with six knots, possibly symbolical of six ways (Gati) or states of life, through which it is believed that every being may have to migrate—a belief common to both Brāhmanism and Buddhism (see p. 122 of this volume). The staff is called Su-darśana (a name for Vishṇu's Ākra), and is daily worshipped for the preservation of its mysterious powers. The mystic white roll which begins just above the left hand and ends before the left knot is called the Lakshmī-vastra, or auspicious covering. The projecting piece of cloth folded in the form of an axe (Paraśu) represents the weapon of Paraśu-Rāma, one of the incarnations of Vishṇu (see pp. 110, 270 of 'Brāhmanism and Hindūism') with which he subdued the enemies of the Brāhmins. With this so-called axe may be contrasted the Buddhist weapon for keeping off the powers of evil (engraved at p. 352).

dhism and Brāhmanism. It is from a recently-taken photograph of Mr. Gaurī-Śaṅkar Uday-Śaṅkar, C.S.I. —a well-known and distinguished Brāhman of Bhau-nagar—who (with Mr. Percival) administered the State during the minority of the present enlightened Mahārāja. Like the Buddha of old, he has renounced the world—that is, he has become a Sannyāsī, and is chiefly engaged in meditation. He has consequently dropped the title C.S.I., and taken the religious title—Svāmī Śrī Saćcidānanda-Sarasvatī. His son, Mr. Vijay-Śaṅkar Gaurī-Śaṅkar, kindly sent me the photograph, and with his permission I have had it engraved.

It will be easily understood that, as a great portion of the following pages had to be delivered in the form of Lectures, occasional repetitions and recapitulations were unavoidable, but I trust I shall not be amenable to the charge of repeating anything for the sake of ‘padding.’ I shall, with more justice, be accused of ‘cramming,’ in the sense of attempting to force too much information into a single volume.

January 1, 1889.

POSTSCRIPT.

Since writing the foregoing prefatory remarks, I have observed with much concern that a prevalent error, in regard to Buddhism, is still persistently propagated.

ERROR IN REGARD TO PREVALENCE OF BUDDHISM. xv

It is categorically stated in a newspaper report of a quite recent lecture, that out of the world's population of about 1500 millions at least 500 millions are Buddhists, and that Buddhism numbers more adherents than any other religion on the surface of the globe.

Almost every European writer on Buddhism, of late years, has assisted in giving currency to this utterly erroneous calculation, and it is high time that an attempt should be made to dissipate a serious misconception.

It is forgotten that mere sympathizers with Buddhism, who occasionally conform to Buddhistic practices, are not true Buddhists. In China the great majority are first of all Confucianists and then either Tāoists or Buddhists or both. In Japan Confucianism and Shintoism co-exist with Buddhism. In some other Buddhist countries a kind of Shamanism is practically dominant. The best authorities (including the Oxford Professor of Chinese, as stated in the Introduction to his excellent work 'The Travels of Fā-hien') are of opinion that there are not more than 100 millions of real Buddhists in the world, and that Christianity with its 430 to 450 millions of adherents has now the numerical preponderance over all other religions. I am entirely of the same opinion. I hold that the Buddhism, described in the following pages, contained within itself, from the earliest times, the germs of disease, decay, and death (see p. 557), and that its present condition is one of rapidly increasing disintegration and decline.

xvi ERROR IN REGARD TO PREVALENCE OF BUDDHISM.

We must not forget that Buddhism has disappeared from India proper, although it dominates in Ceylon and Burma, and although a few Buddhist travellers find their way back to the land of its origin and sojourn there.

Indeed, if I were called upon to give a rough comparative numerical estimate of the six chief religious systems of the world, I should be inclined, on the whole, to regard Confucianism as constituting, next to Christianity, the most numerically prevalent creed. We have to bear in mind the immense populations, both in China and Japan, whose chief creed is Confucianism.

Professor Legge informs me that Dr. Happer—an American Presbyterian Missionary of about 45 years standing, who has gone carefully into the statistics of Buddhism—reckons only 20 millions of Buddhists in China, and not more than $72\frac{1}{2}$ millions in the whole of Asia. Dr. Happer states that, if the Chinese were required to class themselves as Confucianists or Buddhists or Tāoists, $\frac{1}{2}\%$ ths, if not $\frac{2}{3}\%$ ths, of them would, in his opinion, claim to be designated as Confucianists.

In all probability his estimate of the number of Buddhists in China is too low, but the Chinese ambassador Liū, with whom Professor Legge once had a conversation on this subject, ridiculed the view that they were as numerous as the Confucianists.

Undeniably, as it seems to me, the next place after Christianity and Confucianism should be given to Brāhmanism and Hindūism, which are not really two systems but practically one; the latter being merely

ERROR IN REGARD TO PREVALENCE OF BUDDHISM. xvii

an expansion of the former, modified by contact with Buddhism.

Brāhmanism, as I have elsewhere shown, is nothing but spiritual Pantheism ; that is, a belief in the universal diffusion of an impersonal Spirit (called Brāhmān or Brāhmā)—as the only really existing Essence—and in its manifesting itself in Mind and in countless material forces and forms, including gods, demons, men, and animals, which, after fulfilling their course, must ultimately be re-absorbed into the one impersonal Essence and be again evolved in endless evolution and dissolution.

Hindūism, with its worship of Viṣṇu and Śiva, is based on this pantheistic doctrine, but the majority of the Hindūs are merely observers of Brāhmanical institutions with their accompanying Hindū caste usages. If, however, we employ the term Hindū in its widest acceptation (omitting only all Islāmized Hindūs) we may safely affirm that the adherents of Hindūism have reached an aggregate of nearly 200 millions. In the opinion of Sir William Wilson Hunter, they are still rapidly increasing, both by excess of births over deaths and by accretions from more backward systems of belief.

Probably Buddhism has a right to the fourth place in the scale of numerical comparison. At any rate the number of Buddhists can scarcely be calculated at less than 100 millions.

In regard to Muhammadanism, this creed should not, I think, be placed higher than fifth in the enumeration. In its purest form it ought to be called

xviii ERROR IN REGARD TO PREVALENCE OF BUDDHISM.

Islām, and in that form it is a mere distorted copy of Judaism.

The Empress of India, as is well known, rules over more Muhammadans than any other potentate in the world. Probably the Musalmān population of the whole of India now numbers 55 millions.

As to the number of Muhammadans in the Turkish empire, there are no very trustworthy data to guide us, but the aggregate is believed to be about 14 millions; while Africa can scarcely reckon more than that number, even if Egypt be included.

The sixth system, Tāoism (the system of Lāo-tsze), according to Professor Legge, should rank numerically after both Muhammadanism and Buddhism.

Of course Jainism (p. 529) and Zoroastrianism (the religion of the Pārsis) are too numerically insignificant to occupy places in the above comparison.

It is possible that a careful census might result in a more favourable estimate of the number of Buddhists in the world, than I have here submitted; but at all events it may safely be alleged that, even as a form of popular religion, Buddhism is gradually losing its vitality—gradually loosening its hold on the vast populations once loyal to its rule; nay, that the time is rapidly approaching when its capacity for resistance must give way before the mighty forces which are destined in the end to sweep it from the earth.

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 Monier Monier-Williams
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Preface	v
Postscript on the common error in regard to the comparative prevalence of Buddhism in the world	xiv
List of Illustrations	xxix
Rules for Pronunciation	xxxii
Pronunciation of Buddha, etc. Addenda and Corrigenda	xxxii

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

Buddhism in its relation to Brāhmanism. Various sects in Brāhmanism. Creed of the ordinary Hindū. Rise of scepticism and infidelity. Materialistic school of thought. Origin of Buddhism and Jainism. Manysidedness of Buddhism. Its complexity. Labours of various scholars. Divisions of the subject. The Buddha, his Law, his Order of Monks. Northern Buddhism 1-17

LECTURE II.

THE BUDDHA AS A PERSONAL TEACHER.

The Buddha's biography. Date of his birth and death. His names, epithets, and titles. Story of the four visions. Birth of the Buddha's son. The Buddha leaves his home. His life at Rāja-griha. His study of Brāhmanical philosophy. His sexennial fast. His temptation by Māra. He attains perfect enlightenment. The Bodhi-tree. Buddha and Muhammad compared. The Buddha's proceedings after his enlightenment. His first teaching at Benares. First sermon. Effect of first teaching. His first sixty missionaries. His fire-sermon. His eighty great disciples. His two chief and sixteen leading disciples. His forty-five years of preaching and itineration. His death and last words. Character of the Buddha's teaching. His method illustrated by an epitome of one of his parables 18-52

LECTURE III.

THE DHARMA OR LAW AND SCRIPTURES OF BUDDHISM.

PAGE

Origin of the Buddhist Law (Dharma). Buddhist scriptures not like the Veda. First council at Rājagṛiha. Kāśyapa chosen as leader. Recitation of the Buddha's precepts. Second council at Vaiśālī. Āndra-gupta. Third council at Patnā. Composition of southern canon. Tri-piṭaka or three collections. Rules of discipline, moral precepts, philosophical precepts. Commentaries. Buddha-ghoṣa. Aśoka's inscriptions. His edicts and proclamations. Fourth council at Jālandhara. Ka-nishka. The northern canon. The nine Nepālese canonical scriptures. The Tibetan canonical scriptures (Kanjur) . . . 53-70

LECTURE IV.

THE SAṄGHA OR BUDDHIST ORDER OF MONKS.

Nature of the Buddhist brotherhood. Not a priesthood, not a hierarchy. Names given to the monks. Method of admission to the monkhood. Admission of novices. Three-refuge formula. Admission of full monks. Four resources. Four prohibitions. Offences and penances. Eight practices. The monk's daily life. His three garments. Confession. Definition of the Saṅgha or community of monks. Order of Nuns. Lay-brothers and lay-sisters. Relation of the laity to the monkhood. Duties of the laity. Later hierarchical Buddhism. Character of monks of the present day in various countries 71-92

LECTURE V.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL DOCTRINES OF BUDDHISM.

The philosophy of Buddhism founded on that of Brāhmanism. Three ways of salvation in Brāhmanism. The Buddha's one way of salvation. All life is misery. Indian pessimistic philosophy. Twelve-linked chain of causation. Celebrated Buddhist formula. The Buddha's attitude towards the Sāṅkhya and Vedānta philosophy of the Brāhmins. The Buddha's negation of spirit and of a

CONTENTS.

xxi

	PAGE
Supreme Being. Brāhmanical theory of metempsychosis. The Buddhist Skandhas. The Buddhist theory of transmigration. Only six forms of existence. The Buddha's previous births. Examples given of stories of two of his previous births. Destiny of man dependent on his own acts. Re-creative force of acts. Act-force creating worlds. No knowledge of the first act. Cycles of the Universe. Interminable succession of existences like rotation of a wheel. Buddhist Kalpas or ages. Thirty-one abodes of six classes of beings rising one above the other in successive tiers of lower worlds and three sets of heavens	93-122

LECTURE VI.

THE MORALITY OF BUDDHISM AND ITS CHIEF AIM—
 ARHATSHIP OR NIRVĀṆA.

Inconsistency of a life of morality in Buddhism. Division of the moral code. First five and then ten chief rules of moral conduct. Positive injunctions. The ten fetters binding a man to existence. Seven jewels of the Law. Six (or ten) transcendent virtues. Examples of moral precepts from the Dharma-pada and other works. Moral merit easily acquired. Aim of Buddhist morality. External and internal morality. Inner condition of heart. Four paths or stages leading to Arhatship or moral perfection. Three grades of Arhats. Series of Buddhas. Gautama the fourth Buddha of the present age, and last of twenty-five Buddhas. The future Buddha. Explanation of Nirvāṇa and Pari-nirvāṇa as the true aim of Buddhist morality. Buddhist and Christian morality contrasted 123-146

LECTURE VII.

CHANGES IN BUDDHISM AND ITS DISAPPEARANCE FROM INDIA.

Tendency of all religious movements to deterioration and disintegration. The corruptions of Buddhism are the result of its own fundamental doctrines. Re-statement of Buddha's early teaching. Recoil to the opposite extreme. Sects and divisions in Buddhism. The first four principal sects, followed by eighteen, thirty-two, and ninety-six. Mahā-yāna or Great Method (vehicle).

	PAGE
Hina-yāna or Little Method. The Chinese Buddhist travellers, Fā-hien and Hiouen Tshang. Reasons for the disappearance of Buddhism from India. Gradual amalgamation with surrounding systems. Interaction between Buddhism, Vaishnavism, and Śaivism. Ultimate merging of Buddhism in Brāhmanism and Hindūism	147-171

LECTURE VIII.

RISE OF THEISTIC AND POLYTHEISTIC BUDDHISM.

Development of the Mahā-yāna or Great Method. Gradual deification of saints, sages, and great men. Tendency to group in triads. First triad of the Buddha, the Law, and the Order. Buddhist triad no trinity. The Buddha to be succeeded by Maitreya. Maitreya's heaven longed for. Constitution and gradations of the Buddhist brotherhood. Headship and government of the Buddhist monasteries. The first Arhats. Progress of the Mahā-yāna doctrine. The first Bodhi-sattva Maitreya associated with numerous other Bodhi-sattvas. Deification of Maitreya and elevation of Gautama's great pupils to Bodhi-sattvaship. Partial deification of great teachers. Nāgārjuna, Gorakh-nāth. Barlaam and Josaphat 172-194

LECTURE IX.

THEISTIC AND POLYTHEISTIC BUDDHISM.

Second Buddhist triad, Mañju-srī, Avalokitesvara or Padma-pāṇi and Vajra-pāṇi. Description of each. Theory of five human Buddhas, five Dhyāni-Buddhas 'of meditation,' and five Dhyāni-Bodhi-sattvas. Five triads formed by grouping together one from each. Theory of Ādi-Buddha. Worship of the Dhyāni-Buddha Amitābha. Tiers of heavens connected with the four Dhyānas or stages of meditation. Account of the later Buddhist theory of lower worlds and three groups of heavens. Synopsis of the twenty-six heavens and their inhabitants. Hindū gods and demons adopted by Buddhism. Hindū and Buddhist mythology . 195-222

CONTENTS.

xxiii

LECTURE X.

MYSTICAL BUDDHISM IN ITS CONNEXION WITH THE YOGA
 PHILOSOPHY.

	PAGE
Growth of esoteric and mystical Buddhism. Dhyāni-Buddhas. Yoga philosophy. Svāmī Dayānanda-Sarasvatī. Twofold Yoga system. Bodily tortures of Yogīs. Fasting. Complete absorption in thought. Progressive stages of meditation. Samādhi. Six transcendent faculties. The Buddha no spiritualist. Nature of Buddha's enlightenment. Attainment of miraculous powers. Development of Buddha's early doctrine. Eight requisites of Yoga. Six-syllabled sentence. Mystical syllables. Cramping of limbs. Suppression and imprisonment of breath. Suspended animation. Self-concentration. Eight supernatural powers. Three bodies of every Buddha. Ethereal souls and gross bodies. Buddhist Mahātmas. Astral bodies. Modern spiritualism. Modern esoteric Buddhism and Asiatic occultism . . .	223-252

LECTURE XI.

HIERARCHICAL BUDDHISM, ESPECIALLY AS DEVELOPED IN
 TIBET AND MONGOLIA.

The Saṅgha. Development of Hierarchical gradations in Ceylon and in Burma. Tibetan Buddhism. Northern Buddhism connected with Shamanism. Lāmism and the Lāmistic Hierarchy. Gradations of monkhood. Avatāra Lāmas. Vagabond Lāmas. Female Hierarchy. Two Lāmistic sects. Explanation of Avatāra theory. History of Tibet. Early history of Tibetan Buddhism. Thumi Sambhoṭa's invention of the Tibetan alphabet. Indian Buddhists sent for to Tibet. Tibetan canon. Tibetan kings. Founding of monasteries. Buddhism adopted in Mongolia. Hierarchical Buddhism in Mongolia. Invention of Mongolian alphabet. Birth of the Buddhist reformer Tsong Khapa. The Red and Yellow Cap schools. Monasteries of Galdan, Brepung, and Sera. Character of Tsong Khapa's reformation. Resemblance of the Roman Catholic and Lāmistic systems. Death and canonization of Tsong Khapa. Development of the Avatāra theory. The two Grand Lāmas, Dalai Lāma and

	PAGE
Panchen Lāma. Election of Dalai Lāma. Election of the Grand Lāmas of Mongolia. List of Dalai Lāmas. Discovery of present Dalai Lāma. The Lāma or Khanpo of Galdan, of Kurun or Kuren, of Kuku khotun. Lāmism in Ladāk, Tangut, Nepāl, Bhutān, Sikkim. In China and Japan. Divisions in Japanese Buddhism. Buddhism in Russian territory	253-302

LECTURE XII.

CEREMONIAL AND RITUALISTIC BUDDHISM.

<p>Opposition of early Buddhism to sacerdotalism and ceremonialism. Reaction. Religious superstition in Tibet and Mongolia. Accounts by Koeppen, Schlagintweit, Markham, Huc, Sarat Chandra Dās. Admission-ceremony of a novice in Burma and Ceylon. Boy-pupils. Daily life in Burmese monasteries, according to Shway Yoe. Observances during Vassa. Pirit ceremony. Mahā-baṇa Pirit. Admission-ceremonies in Tibet and Mongolia. Dress and equipment of a Lāmistic monk. Dorje. Prayer-bell. Use of Tibetan language in the Ritual. A. Csoma de Kőrös' life and labours. Form and character of the Lāmistic Ritual. Huc's description of a particular Ritual. Holy water, consecrated grain, tea-drinking. Ceremonies in Sikkim and Ladāk. Ceremony at Sarat Chandra Dās' presentation to the Dalai Lāma. Ceremony at translation of a chief Lāma's soul. Other ceremonies. Uposatha and fast-days. Circumambulation. Comparison with Roman Catholic Ritual</p>	303-339
---	---------

LECTURE XIII.

FESTIVALS, DOMESTIC RITES, AND FORMULARIES OF PRAYERS.

<p>New Year's Festivals in Burma and Tibet. Festivals of Buddha's birth and death. Festival of lamps. Local Festivals. Chase of the spirit-kings. Religious masquerades and dances. Religious dramas in Burma and Tibet. Weapons used against evil spirits. Dorje. Phurbu. Tattooing in Burma. Domestic rites and usages. Birth-ceremonies in Ceylon and Burma. Name-giving ceremonies. Horoscopes. Baptism in Tibet and</p>
--

CONTENTS.

XXV

	PAGE
Mongolia. Amulets. Marriage-ceremonies. Freedom of women in Buddhist countries. Usages in sickness. Merit gained by saving animal-life. Usages at death. Cremation. Funeral-ceremonies in Sikkim, Japan, Ceylon, Burma, Tibet, and Mongolia. Exposure of corpses in Tibet and Mongolia. Prayer-formularies. Monlam. Maṇi-padme or 'jewel-lotus' formulary. Prayer-wheels, praying-cylinders and method of using them. Formularies on rocks, etc. Man Dangs. Prayer-flags. Mystic formularies. Rosaries. Ḍamaru. Manual of daily prayers .	340-386

LECTURE XIV.

SACRED PLACES.

The sacred land of Buddhism. Kapila-vastu, the Buddha's birth-place. The arrow-fountain. Buddha-Gayā. Ancient Temple. Sacred tree. Restoration of Temple. Votive Stūpas. Mixture of Buddhism and Hindūism. Hiouen Thsang's description of Buddha-Gayā. Sārnāth near Benares. Ruined Stūpa. Sculpture illustrating four events in the Buddha's career. Rāja-griha. Scene of incidents in the Buddha's life. Devadatta's plots. Satta-panṇi cave. Śrāvastī. Residence in Jetavana monastery. Sandal-wood image. Miracles. Vaiśālī, place of second council. Description by Hiouen Thsang and Fā-hien. Kauśāmbī. Great monolith. Nālanda monastery. Hiouen Thsang's description. Saṅkāśya, place of Buddha's descent from heaven. Account of the triple ladder. Sāketa or Ayodhyā. Miraculous tree. Kanyā-kubja. Śilāditya. Pāṭali-putra. Aśoka's palace. Founding of hospitals. First Stūpa. Kesa-riya. Ruined mound. Stūpa. Kuśi-nagara, the place of the Buddha's death and Pari-nirvāṇa 387-425

LECTURE XV.

MONASTERIES AND TEMPLES.

Five kinds of dwellings permissible for monks. Institution of monasteries. Cave-monasteries. Monasteries in Ceylon, Burma, and British Sikkim. Monastery at Kilang in Lahūl; at Kunbum; at Kuku khotun; at Kuren; at Lhāssa. Palace-

	PAGE
monastery of Potala. Residence of Dalai Lāma, and Mr. Manning's interview with him. Monasteries of Lā brang, Ramoche, Moru, Gar Ma Khian. Three mother-monasteries of the Yellow Sect, Galdan, Sera, and Dapung. Tashi Lunpo and the Tashi Lāma. Mr. Bogle's interview with the Tashi Lāma. Turner's interview with the Grand Lāma of the Terpaling monastery. Sarat Chandra Dās' description of the Tashi Lunpo monastery. Monasteries of the Red Sect, Sam ye and Sakyā. Monastery libraries. Temples. Cave-temples or Āityas. The Elorā Āitya. The Kārle Āitya. Village temples. Temples in Ceylon. Temple at Kelani. Tooth-temple at Kandy. Burmese temples. Rangoon pagoda. Temples in Sikkim, Mongolia, and Tibet. Great temple at Lhāssa; at Ramoche; at Tashi Lunpo	426-464

LECTURE XVI.

IMAGES AND IDOLS.

Introduction of idolatry into India. Ancient image of Buddha. Gradual growth of objective Buddhism. Development of image-worship. Self-produced images. Hiouen Thsang's account of the sandal-wood image. Form, character, and general characteristics of images. Outgrowth of Buddha's skull. Nimbus. Size, height, and different attitudes of Buddha's images. 'Meditative,' 'Witness,' 'Serpent-canopied,' 'Argumentative' or 'Teaching,' 'Preaching,' 'Benedictive,' 'Mendicant,' and 'Recumbent' Attitudes. Representations of Buddha's birth. Images of other Buddhas and Bodhi-sattvas. Images of Amitābha, of Maitreya, of Mañjuśrī, of Avalokiteśvara, of Kwan-yin and Vajra-pāṇi. Images of other Bodhi-sattvas, gods and goddesses	465-492
---	---------

LECTURE XVII.

SACRED OBJECTS.

Sung-Yun's description of objects of worship. Three classes of Buddhist sacred objects	493-495
Relics. Hindū ideas of impurity connected with death.	

CONTENTS.

xxvii

PAGE

Hindū and Buddhist methods of honouring ancestors compared.
 Worship of the Buddha's relics. The Buddha's hair and nails.
 Eight portions of his relics. Adventures of one of the Buddha's
 teeth. Tooth-temple at Kandy. Celestial light emitted by
 relics. Exhibition of relics. Form and character of Buddhist
 relic-receptacles. Ācītyas, Stūpas, Dāgabas, and their develop-
 ment into elaborate structures. Votive Stūpas 495-506

Worship of foot-prints. Probable origin of the worship of
 foot-prints. Alleged foot-prints of Christ. Vishṇu-pad at Gayā.
 Jaina pilgrims at Mount Pārasnāth. Adam's Peak. Foot-prints
 in various countries. Mr. Alabaster's description of the foot-
 print in Siam. Marks on the soles of the Buddha's feet 506-514

Sacred trees. General prevalence of tree-worship. Belief
 that spirits inhabit trees. Offerings hung on trees. Trees of
 the seven principal Buddhas. The Āsvattha or Pippala is of all
 trees the most revered. Other sacred trees. The Kalpa-tree.
 Wishing-tree. Kabīr Var tree 514-520

Sacred symbols. The Tri-ratna symbol. The Āakra or
 Wheel symbol. The Lotus-flower. The Svastika symbol. The
 Throne symbol. The Umbrella. The Śaṅkha or Conch-shell 520-523

Sacred animals. Worship of animals due to doctrine of
 metempsychosis. Elephants. Deer. Pigs. Fish 524-526

Miscellaneous objects. Bells. Seven precious substances.
 Seven treasures belonging to every universal monarch 526-528

SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS ON THE CONNEXION OF BUDDHISM
 WITH JAINISM.

Difference between the Buddhist and Jaina methods of
 obtaining liberation. Nigaṅṭhas. Two Jaina sects. Dig-am-
 baras and Śvetāmbaras. The three chief points of difference
 between them. Their sacred books. Characteristics of both
 sects as distinguished from Buddhism. Belief in existence of
 souls. Moral code. Three-jewels. Five moral prohibitions.
 Prayer-formula. Temples erected for acquisition of merit 529-536