LECTURE VI.

Some Notes on the History of Buddhism.

ANY presentation of Buddhism would be very imperfect without at least an attempt to sketch the most instructive and suggestive history of the curious developments which, during its long career, it has, in different times and places, undergone. This history is especially interesting from a comparative point of view. Buddhism starts with a complete philosophical and psychological theory worked out by men of great intellectual power and considerable culture. It took its rise among an advancing and conquering people full of pride in their colour and their race, in their achievements and their progress. It advocated a view in many respects far in advance of what had been reached and, for the matter of that, of what has even now been reached by the average philosophic and religious mind. It made its first conquests in a great continent occupied by peoples of various races and holding widely different views; their leaders often, it is

true, well trained in philosophic thought, but the mass of the folk entangled in multiform varieties of an indiscriminating animism. And it soon spread over the frontiers among nations, some of them more barbarous still than the then most uncultured Indians. Buddhism has been adopted by the wild hordes on the cold table-lands of Nepal, Tartary, and Tibet, by the cultured Chinese in their varying climes, in the peninsula of Korea, whence it spread to the islands of Japan, and by the Sinhalese and Siamese under the palm groves of the south. It has penetrated on the west to the confines of Europe; on the north it numbers its adherents amid the snow and ice of Siberia; and in the far east it was the dominant religion for centuries in the beautiful islands of the Javanese archipelago. Wherever it has gone it has been so modified by the national characteristics and the inherited beliefs of its converts, acting upon the natural tendencies within itself to alteration and decay, that it has developed, under these conditions, into strangely inconsistent and even antagonistic beliefs and practices. But each of these beliefs breathes more or less of the spirit of the system out of which they all alike have grown, and most interesting it is to trace the causes which have produced out of it such different results.

It would be premature to attempt, in our present state of knowledge, to trace any development in doctrine in the sacred books themselves. Except in one particular, the system presented to our view in the dialogues, as repeated in the Anguttara and Saṁyutta Nikāyas, as developed in the psychological books, and as used as the basis of the poetry, presents the picture of a continuous and consistent whole. And this is not surprising considering the perfection of the system as it came from the hands of the Master, and the intellectual activity, and enthusiastic culture, of the men by whom it was first handed down. But in the century or two after the death of Gotama, during which the books, as we have them, were put into their present shape, there was time enough for a very considerable growth of opinion concerning the person of their revered teacher.

Most of these developments were due to the later books after the canon was closed. The various details referred to in Lecture III., in which the later accounts of the Jātaka, and of the Sanskrit poems, have been anticipated in an unpublished Suttanta, relate only to the legend of his birth.* And even on this matter the later versions are, as one would expect, much more expanded.

* *Journ. R. A. S.*, 1894, pp. 386, 387.

But the first disruption in the Order took place on other questions, namely, on matters connected with the regulation of the Order itself. One hundred years after the death of Buddha, according to the oldest account preserved in an appendix to the *Khandakas*, there arose a certain party in the Order which proclaimed and practised a loosening of the rules in ten particulars. These ten particulars seem to us now to be very trumpery; just as the disputes between the Irish and Romish sections of the Christian Church at the synod of Whitby, held in the seventh century, seem to us moderns to be concerning matters of little moment,—the exact position and shape of the tonsure and the exact dating of the Easter festival. No doubt in both cases there were greater differences behind, and though these are not apparent in the most ancient Buddhist account they come out very strongly in later writers. As I have given the whole list of the ten indulgences in my manual, *Buddhism*, I need not repeat them here; and will only remind you that the last and most important of them was, that gold and silver might be received by members of the Order.

To put an end to the disputes upon these points a Council of the leading members of the Order was held at Vesāli and the heretical opinions were condemned. The long-continued struggle on the ques-

tion—as important for the history of Buddhism as the Arian controversy for that of Christianity—agitated the whole Buddhist world to its very centre. And the decision on the point, given at this Council of Vesāli, led to a serious schism in the Buddhist Church.

Now the ten indulgences are each summed up in a single word; and these words are, each and all of them, conspicuous by their absence from the books on the laws and regulations of the Order included in the canon, except that they appear in an historical account added, quite evidently as an appendix, to the collection of treatises, or *Khandakas*, described in my second lecture. This fact is of the very greatest importance in determining the date at which those *Khandakas* must have been composed. The ten points in dispute were all matters of ecclesiastical law. They all related to observances of the Brotherhood. Is it probable that, in a set of rules and treatises which seek to set forth, down to the minutest detail, and even with hair-splitting diffuseness, all that has any relation to the daily life of the Brethren and the regulation of the Buddhist Order, —is it probable that, in such a collection, if, when it was compiled, the struggle on these ten points had already burst into flame, there should be no reference at all, even in interpolations, to any one of

these ten disputes? That the difference of opinion on each of the ten points remains altogether unnoticed in that part of the rules and treatises where, in the natural order of things, it would be obviously referred to—that the rules are not in any way altered to cover, or to suggest, any decision of the points in dispute,—and that they are only mentioned in an appendix where the Council held to decide them is described, shows clearly that the rules and treatises, as we have them, must have been put together before the time when the Council of Vesāli was held.*

The ancient story of the Council stops at the point where the ten indulgences are rejected. But the Ceylon chronicles, which have preserved the tradition of the orthodox school (and are therefore, notwithstanding their later date, very good evidence as *against* that school), admit that the matter did not rest there. They say that the adherents of the ten indulgences proceeded to hold a council of their own, and I will read you the account of what they admit that the heretics did. The animus of the description only entitles it to a greater confidence.

The Dīpa Vansa, the older of the two Chronicles in question, has the following words : †

* The above argument is taken from the Introd. to *Vinaya Texts from the Pali*, pp. xxi., xxii.

† Book v., verses 32 and following.

"The monks of the Great Council twisted the teaching round.
They broke up the original scriptures and made a new recension,
A chapter put in one place they put in another,
And distorted the sense and the doctrine of the Five Nikāyas.
These monks—who knew neither what had been spoken at length
Nor what had been spoken in abstract, neither
What was the obvious nor what the higher meaning—
Put things referring to one matter as if they referred to another,
And destroyed much of the spirit by holding to the shadow of the letter
They partly rejected the Sutta, and the Vinaya so deep,
And made another rival Sutta and Vinaya of their own.
The Parivāra abstract, and the book of the Abhidhamma,
The Patisambhidā, the Niddesa, and a portion of the Jātaka,
So much they put aside, and made others in their place.
They rejected the well known rules of nouns and genders too,
Of composition and of literary skill, and put others in their place."

This council of the heretics we see was called, as the orthodox chroniclers admit, "The Great Council," which seems to show that the number of its

adherents was not to be despised; and from it, in the next two centuries and a half, seventeen bodies of more or less heretical doctrine were gradually formed in the Buddhist Church. These were not sects in our sense. There was no division of organisation, or church government. There were no such things as churches, or church services; and the divisions, such as they were, remained solely differences of opinion. Various schools were named, for the most part, after the names of some great teachers, or after the locality in which they took their rise. Only a few of the names refer to matters of doctrine. The division did not therefore correspond to the division between Greek Catholics, Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Independents, and so forth, but rather to the division between Broad, High, and Low Church. We have, unfortunately, none of their early books surviving. It would appear, from the passage just read from the Dīpa Vansa, that all the schools continued to use the books in the Piṭakas, though they made changes in some of them. For the only books which they are stated to have rejected are those of the Abhidhamma, and three prose works included in the Appendix described to you in my second lecture, and one other, the Parivāra, or student's manual, which has been added to the canon law, that is to the Rules and the Treatises.

The canon law itself was in fact retained, subject no doubt to slight alterations and differences of interpretation. So also it is not stated that they rejected any of the Dialogues, or even the great rearrangements of Buddhist doctrine in the Anguttara and Saṃyutta Nikāyas.

It is scarcely credible that, had they done so, it would not have been thrown in their teeth by the orthodox chroniclers and commentators; and it is expressly implied that they accepted, and continued to use, all the books of religious and philosophical poetry. Even as late as the time of Asoka we find that Tissa, the son of Moggalī, the author of the Kathā Vatthu, in his arguments against those who differed from the orthodox school, appeals throughout to the Pitaka texts, and takes it for granted that his opponents will acknowledge them as decisive. But no doubt the leaders of the various schools did, from time to time, compile works now lost, but of which we may some day be able to gather some fragments from Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese manuscripts still extant, though not translated.

As to the actual points at issue, the best authority is, of course, the Kathā Vatthu itself. The author states the various theses put forward by his opponents, but does not specify who they are, nor to what school they belong. This information is

afforded to us by the Commentary on the Kathā Vatthu, which has been edited in full for the Pali Text Society, although it has not been translated. This traditional interpretation and identification of the schools referred to was handed down in the seats of orthodox learning; and the Pali version of it, still preserved to us, has come from the great Buddhist seminary of the Mahā Vihāra in Ceylon. There is no reason why the supporters of the orthodox school should have modified or recast this tradition. There may have been mistakes, no doubt, but, in the absence of any motive to the contrary, there is no valid reason for refusing to accept the tradition as a bona-fide statement of what they held to be true.

Now this work and its commentary are so important for a history of the development of Buddhism that, although much pressed by other work which prevented my undertaking an edition of the text, I made a complete analysis, from a manuscript in my possession, of each of the questions raised in the Kathā Vatthu, and published it in 1892 in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. It is impossible here to discuss the results in any detail, but two general conclusions may be stated with advantage.

In the first place, there had survived, at the time when the Kathā Vatthu was written (that is to say, in B. C. 250), only a small proportion of the seven-

teen schools, whose names have been handed down by tradition. Some of them only come before us in the pages of the Kathā Vatthu Commentary as the supporters of one or two theses of no very great importance.

But five of the schools are mentioned pretty frequently, and of these, the two principal are the Uttarā-pāṭhakas, or Northerners, and the Dakkhina-pāṭhakas, or Southerners. This conclusion is entirely confirmed from two sources, which are mutually quite independent.

The one is the inscriptions. Among the ruins of the Buddhist topes, now being investigated by the Archeological Survey of India, are found a number of votive tablets on which are inscribed the names of the donors. For the most part these are personal names only, but quite occasionally the name of the school to which the person belonged is incidentally added. No doubt at the time when the tablets were put up there may have been two or more persons of the same name living in the locality, and the description is added for the sake of distinction. I have collected all the instances of this in my article, and the result agrees with the conclusions derived from the Kathā Vatthu and its Commentary.

The other confirmation comes from a source not so authoritative as being much later. But it is

equally independent and more complete. Yuan Thsang, in the account of his travels in India, mentions, in regard to each locality, the estimated number of Buddhist recluses in each place at that time, *i. e.*, the early part of the seventh century. The list is a very long one, but I have thoroughly analysed it in an article in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for 1892. The conclusions to be drawn from it as to the comparative prevalence of the various schools substantially coincide with the conclusions drawn from the Kathā Vatthu and its commentary.

The subject-matter of the differences in opinion between the orthodox and the other schools had, no doubt, in the time of Yuan Thsang assumed greater proportions. He gives no details, but it seems from the Kathā Vatthu that, in B. C. 250, the differences were principally of three kinds. In the first place we find that in the North and also in the South the old heresy of the soul-theory had crept back by side issues into the doctrine from which it had been categorically and explicitly excluded by Gotama and his earlier followers. In the second place we find that the exaltation of their revered Master had led some of his followers to go far beyond the belief in objective miraculous phenomena at his birth and at his death, and had produced a belief also in

the personal superiority of their Master above the ordinary laws which govern human life. They not only believed that the earth was illumined at his birth, that flowers fell from heaven, that his mother's conception was immaculate, that he was transfigured before the eyes of his disciples, that an earthquake was occasioned by his birth and death, but that he himself was "*Lokuttara*" (above the common, superhuman, transcendental), not only in moments of supreme enlightenment, but in all the ordinary affairs of life. And thirdly, we find the germs of a belief we shall meet with farther on which proved even more disruptive in its tendency than either of the two we have mentioned—that is, that the real ideal for the Buddhist to aim at was, not Arahatship, the centre point and crown of the earlier Buddhism, but Bodhisatship, the essential doctrine of what is self-complacently called by its followers the Mahā Yāna, or Greater Vehicle.

All these three notions do in fact hang together, support one another, and have eventually developed into a system diametrically antagonistic to Gotama's own doctrine of a salvation in this life in Arahatship by self-culture and self-control. The materials are not yet available from which an accurate history of the fall can be drawn out in consecutive order, or in sufficiency of detail; and I do not envy the his-

torian who shall take up the task of tracing the gradual intrusion of animistic and transcendental views, and beliefs in the supernatural, into the purely human and psychological ethics of the earlier system. But it is already possible to show the lines along which the later speculation went, and to trace the causes of the recrudescence of the errors which Gotama's reform was intended to kill.

You will recollect that there is included in the Buddhist canon a collection of the Indian folk-lore of that time, in which Gotama the Buddha himself in a previous birth has been identified with the hero of each particular story. The greatness and goodness and insight of the Buddha were in the eyes of his followers much too perfect to have been wrought out or developed in a single lifetime. Through ages upon ages he had gradually exercised himself in the *Pārāmitās* (or sublime conditions), necessary to the attainment of Buddhahood. These are Generosity and Kindness and Renunciation and Wisdom and Resolution and Patience and Love of Truth and Energy and Good-will and Equanimity. At the end of each existence the Karma, that is, the doing or action accumulated in the previous birth, was handed on to a new individual who (though from the Christian point of view different from the others as having no continuing memory and no consciousness of

identity) was, according to the Buddhist standpoint, the same individual, as being the product of the same Karma. And the Buddhist books glow with the fervour of gratitude in passages where they describe the self-abnegation of the Blessed One who submitted to be born again and again, that he might bring about the emancipation of mankind. For all through this time, whenever he was re-born as a man, he might, according to the view even of the orthodox school, have attained to Arahatship. The Karma which he inherited would no longer, then, have been re-individualised. It would have been dissipated in the good effect which his actions, his Karma, might have had upon other individuals. But that particular chain of existence would have been broken, the *Pārāmitās* would never have been accomplished, and Gotama would not have become the Buddha. The Buddha therefore had, in his previous existences, deliberately abandoned that ideal which, in his historical existence, he urged men to set before them as their goal.

It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that the mistake began to be made of regarding the Bodhisat (that is, one of the individuals in the chain of those who were perfecting the *Pārāmitās*) as a higher being than the Arahat. I say the mistake, for it was a mistake in two senses. The old Buddhist tradition

rarely states that the Bodhisat was consciously pursuing the aim of becoming a Buddha. I only know of one passage older than the fifth century of our era in which this idea is put forward. And it was also a mistake from the ethical point of view. For from the moment that Arahatship began to be looked down upon in comparison with Bodhisatship, the whole system of mental training and self-control began to be neglected and even ignored.

The results of this took a long time to work out their full effect. One standard work of perhaps the principal of the seventeen schools—the Lokuttaravādins, or Transcendentalists—has survived. It is written in Sanskrit, and is being now edited, with a quite unusual degree both of care and of scholarship, by M. Émile Senart of Paris. The date of the work has not been ascertained with any certainty, but it is probably at least as old as the second century B.C. These Transcendentalists were the school which represented most nearly the views of those who held the Great Council; and so far as the edition has gone, it gives a very curious view of the position which they held. I have not noticed a single passage in which any of the propositions laid down in the Dialogues, is, in so many words, denied or even disputed; but the whole point of view has become entirely different, and it must have required

a considerable time for so great a change to have taken place. Practically speaking the whole burden of the Dialogues is Arahatship, or one or other of its thirty-seven constituent elements of Arahatship. ' In the Mahā Vastu, which is the name of this manual of the Transcendentalists, Arahatship is indeed incidentally taken for granted as an ideal, if not *the* ideal. But the burden of the book is the consideration, from various points, of the stages which lead, not to Arahatship, but to Bodhisatship. It will be easier to speak more absolutely when M. Senart shall have finished his great work, but this is the impression which the volumes already published make upon the careful reader.

In the "Lotus of the Good Law" (the Saddharma Puṇḍarīka, as it is called in Sanskrit), of which we have a French translation by M. Burnouf, and a translation into English by Prof. Kern of Leiden, we find a stage far beyond that which has been reached in the Mahā Vastu of the Transcendentalists. In the Lotus we find that Arahatship is explicitly condemned, and Bodhisatship held up as the goal at which every good Buddhist has to aim; and the whole exposition of this theory, so subversive of the original Buddhism, is actually placed in the mouth of Gotama himself. The doctrine of Bodhisatship as the ideal is here called the Greater

Vehicle, as opposed to the Lesser Vehicle of Arahatship.

The Mahā Yāna doctors said, in effect: "We grant you all you say about the bliss of attaining Nirvana in this life. But it produces advantage chiefly to yourselves. And according to your own theory there will be a necessity for Buddhas in the future as much as there has been for Buddhas in the past. Greater, higher, nobler, then, than the attainment of Arahatship must be the attainment of Bodhisatship from a desire to save all living creatures in the ages that will come."

The new teaching therefore was in no conscious contradiction to the old. It accepted it all and was based upon it. Its distinguishing characteristic was the great stress which is laid on one point of the earlier doctrine to the gradual overshadowing of the rest. Its strength lay in the grandeur of its appeal to self-renunciation. It is true the newer school unconsciously thereby changed the centre point of the system, the focus of their mental vision. But it was at least no slight merit to have been led, even though they were led astray, by a sense of duty to the race. They might have been wiser, had they seen more clearly the originality of Gotama's system of ethics, and perceived that the race would really be benefited much more largely by the older

doctrine of Arahatship, than by the new stress laid upon Bodhisatship. But readers of the Mahā Yāna books, tedious as these have so often been called, and rightly called, will find them acquire a new significance, and even a new beauty, when they are read in the light of this conception. The whole history of this development of belief, firstly in the putting of Arahatship into the background, and putting the Jātaka stories and the road of Bodhisatship into the foreground; and then the actual contempt of Arahatship, and the adoption, to its explicit as well as its virtual exclusion, of Bodhisatship, has yet to be written. The final step is attributed by later chroniclers, Tibetan and Chinese, to Nāgārjuna. And there are works extant, though only in Tibetan and Chinese translations, which are attributed to him. These works, however, are not yet accessible to the West; and of the Hīna Yāna books (that is to say, the books of the older schools which led on to the final result) we have only the Mahā Vastu, and the Sanskrit poems on the life of Buddha which were mentioned in my third lecture. But it is possible already to point out some of the results which followed from the newer doctrine. That the progress was very slow we know from the statements of Yuan Thsang. For in his time, that is, as late as the sixth century of our era, two thirds

of the members of the Buddhist Order still adhered to the older doctrine. And in Nālandā, the great Buddhist university of that time, both the schools seem to have been represented.

As the Bodhisat theory loomed larger and larger before the minds of the Buddhists, their thoughts naturally turned with peculiar reverence to the Bodhisats of the past, the present, and the future, rather than to the Arahats whose names are recorded in the sacred books. Thus Nāgārjuna himself is looked upon by the Chinese as a Bodhisát, and Yuan Thsang mentions a number of persons, leaders in the newer school, with the title of Bodhisat. So the "Lotus of the Good Law" imitates the older Dialogues by giving a kind of introductory story describing the place and the occasion, on which Gotama is said to have propounded this much later work. And the persons to whom it is addressed, the assembly which surrounded him on that occasion, consists of a number of Bodhisats, instead of the actual persons by whom we know that the historical Buddha was in his lifetime surrounded. For not only were distinguished human beings singled out as Bodhisats, but a vast number of hypothetical beings were introduced as objects of reverence and worship on the ground that they were Bodhisats. As time went on, converts to this

later Buddhism, who were well acquainted with the Hindu gods and goddesses of the day, thought to bring about a reconciliation between the two faiths by simply turning the Hindu gods and goddesses into Bodhisats, and representing them as supporters of the Buddha.

One of the chief agents in this line of development seems to have been Asaṅga, an influential monk of Peshawur in the Panjāb, who lived and wrote the first text-book of the creed—the Yogācāra Bhūmi Çāstra—about the sixth century of our era. He managed with great dexterity to reconcile the two opposing systems by placing a number of Saivite gods in the Pantheon of his newer Buddhism, and by incorporating into it a great deal of mystic Tantric doctrine from the prevalent animism. He thus made it possible for the half-converted, rude tribes to remain Buddhists while they brought offerings, and even bloody offerings, to these more congenial shrines; and while their practical beliefs had no relation at all to the four Truths or the Noble Eightfold Path, but busied itself almost wholly with attaining magic powers (Siddhi), by means of magic phrases (Dhārani) and magic circles (Maṇḍala). These Mahā Yāna books inculcating the new doctrines were translated, along with the older ones, into Chinese. Yuan Thsang regarded himself as a

Mahāyānist, took many books of the Greater Vehicle back to China, and in his labours as a translator was imitated by a long line of workers in the same field. The later books were afterwards translated into Tibetan, and the new doctrine attained in Tibet to so great a development, that Tibetan Buddhism, or rather Lamaism, has come to be the exact contrary of the earlier Buddhism. It has been worked up there into a regular system which has shut out all of the earlier Buddhism, although a few of the earlier books are also to be found in Tibetan translations.

In China, on the contrary, we find no evidence of a special system. All the books, early and late, are mixed together in one heterogeneous collection. Though no doubt the books of the Great Vehicle have by far the preponderating influence, yet books of various ages are still studied, and different schools in China have adopted different degrees of the newer doctrine.

Buddhism was introduced into Japan in the sixth century from the Korea, and having started there at so late a date, it has retained very little of the older doctrine, except the theories of impermanence, of the sorrow inherent in individuality, and of the absence of any abiding principle as set out in my fourth lecture. There are indeed now many sects

of Buddhists in that country, but their divisions are entirely distinct from the divisions into Greater and Lesser Vehicle. All of them are founded on the Greater Vehicle, and they have developed in various ways along purely local lines. There are even members of the Order to be found there who are married clergy, and who preach a salvation to be reached in heaven.

But it is especially in Tibet that the doctrine of Bodhisatship has received its most curious development; and there alone is it, that the head of the Buddhist Order has also become the temporary ruler of the state, and is considered as being himself a living Bodhisat. In my *Hibbert Lectures* there will be found (pp. 192–195) a statement of the very curious and interesting similarities between this latest phase of the corruption of Buddhism, and the latest phase of Christianity in Rome.

In this connection I shall doubtless be expected to say a few words on Theosophy, if only because one of the books giving an account of that very curious and widely spread movement has been called *Esoteric Buddhism.* It has always been a point of wonder to me why the author should have chosen this particular title for his treatise. For if there is anything that can be said with absolute certainty about the book it is, that it is not esoteric,

and not Buddhism. The original Buddhism was the very contrary of esoteric. Gotama was accustomed, throughout his long career, to speak quite openly to everyone of the whole of the view of life which he had to propound. No doubt there were a certain number of questions to which it was his habit to refuse to reply. These were questions the discussion of which, in his opinion, was apt to lead the mind astray, and so far from being conducive to a growth in insight, would be a hindrance to the only thing which was supremely worth aiming at,—the perfect life in Arahatship. The reason for his reticence was not at all that he had formulated any doctrine upon them which he wished to conceal from some people, and reveal only to other more intimate disciples. Such questions as—What shall I be during the ages of the future? Do I after all exist, or am I not? How am I? This is a being: Whence did it come? And whither will it go?—are regarded as worse than unprofitable, and the Buddha not only refused to discuss them, but held that the tendency, the desire to discuss them was a weakness, and that the answers usually given were a delusion. There are a whole set of such questions, drawn up in identical words in several of the Dialogues, a consideration of which is called the Walking in Delusion, the Jungle, the Wilderness, the Puppet Show, the

Writhing, the Fetter of Delusion. Gotama says, just before he dies, in a passage I have already read to you: "I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine; for in respect of the truths, Ānanda, the Tathāgata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher who keeps some things back." And it is quite impossible for anyone who reads the Pali books to avoid seeing that everything which the Master himself, and his early disciples, regarded as important is not only set out with a lavish exposition which seeks above all to make the whole matter clear to everybody, but is even explained with a length of detail which those not interested in the system find tedious in the extreme. There is not the slightest hint throughout the whole of the Piṭakas of any esoteric teaching. And even as late as the *Milinda* we find the ideal teacher described in the following words: "He should be zealous, teach nothing partially, keep nothing secret, and hold nothing back."* It is only when the Mahā Yāna books, written many centuries after the time of Gotama, wished to father on the Buddha opinions different from those which he actually promulgated, that we find the allegation, in Buddhist

* *Questions of King Milinda*, vol i., p. 142 of my translation. Compare also the note at pp. 267, 268.

books, of an esoteric teaching. It was the only way in which the writers of those books could at the same time call themselves Buddhist followers of Gotama, and yet put forward the new ideas, contrary to those of Gotama, which they were anxious to propagate.

And not only was there nothing esoteric in the real original Buddhism. The views expressed in *Esoteric Buddhism*, so far as they are Indian at all, are not esoteric. The study of self-induced trance is common to all the Indian schools. All that is taught on the subject is accessible in handbooks, and the teachers who practised themselves in such things are always willing to teach them to anyone who will submit to the necessary discipline. In this sense only is it that Indian teachers, other than the Buddhist, can occasionally be described as esoteric. And this is a sense in which the word is also applicable to our own teachers in the universities of the West. They will not admit to their classes any chance comer who has not undergone the necessary discipline to enable him to appreciate what they have to say. All the talk about "astral body" and the different kinds of "soul," seven more or less, which is, or rather was, put forward as esoteric Buddhism, is a part of the Yoga philosophy of India, which is perfectly accessible to all the world.

And so far as I have been able to ascertain (though the later Buddhists were much given to magic and Tantric charms), this happens to be a part of the current Indian belief on those subjects which even they have never adopted. It is of course diametrically opposed to all the most essential Buddhist doctrines as set out in outline in my last two lectures. You will see therefore, why I venture to say that the views put forward, in the work referred to, are neither esoteric, nor are they Buddhism.

At the same time it is fair to add that Theosophists in general do not any longer, I believe, describe their tenets under the name of Esoteric Buddhism, and we must not forget that there are Theosophists and Theosophists. There are not a few among them who are doing good service in helping to break down that ignorant self-complacency which regards any notions differing from the current notions held in the West as quite unworthy of notice. There are not a few of them who have really devoted themselves to a patient study of Eastern philosophies and Eastern religions, and who have rendered real service to scholarship by bringing over MSS. and providing funds for the publication of translations of Eastern books. There may be much in Theosophy which suggests a superficial curiosity into obscure questions of psycho-physics,

and into half-savage practices of magic, black and white. But no one can doubt the sincerity of such Theosophists as those to whom I have just referred. I regret that an unfortunate title, now no longer emphasised by Theosophists themselves, should have led very widely to a confusion between a great and sane system of philosophical ethics, and speculations of very doubtful validity (really in many instances, the rebound of half-trained intellects from a crass materialism) and mixed up with historical heresies of a most startling character.

It is very instructive to notice the fact that the name of Buddhism has been rejected by the leading expounders of Theosophy. This fact is really an unconscious tribute to the success of the efforts that have been made in the last few years to render the authorities of the real, original Buddhism accessible to the Western world. And I venture to think that the publication and translation of the Buddhist texts may possibly have no little influence among the more cultured of those Eastern peoples, who still call themselves Buddhists although they have wandered, in many respects, so far from the ancient faith. When Japanese students, for instance, come to our Western colleges and learn there to read their Pali and Sanskrit books under the guidance of professors trained in historical criticism, it is almost

impossible that they can return to their own country without the accuracy of their knowledge being greatly improved, and their ideas of Buddhism, to some extent at least, corrected and modified. We have an admirable instance of this in the very valuable catalogue of Chinese Sanskrit books published by Mr. Bunyiu Nanjio, at the University Press of Oxford. Prepared under the guidance of the distinguished Professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford, Professor Max Muller, this book is a model of what such a catalogue ought to be, with discussions about dates, and careful indexes to all the names of the books and authors mentioned. Mr. Bunyiu Nanjio, while in London and Oxford, studied Buddhist Sanskrit, and has now returned to Japan to occupy the post of Professor at the University of Tokio.

This is one of the excellent results following on the increased intercommunication between East and West which are now becoming so frequent, and which we owe to the victories over nature achieved by Western science. It was the desire of peoples to travel and have intercourse with one another which was one of the principal means of spurring on inventions. And the inventions, in their turn, have made possible such a meeting as the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, where minds steeped exclusively

in Western and New-World ideas listened, not only with interest, but also with sympathy, greatly heightened by the presence of their representatives, to the expositions of Eastern creeds.

It is true that a perusal of the numerous speeches made at that Congress (and I have read the Buddhist ones very carefully) show how astounding is the gulf on all sides between popular beliefs and the conclusions of scholarship. To take only one instance from the address on Buddha by the Right Rev. Zitsuzen Ashitsu of Japan. He says: "The Person of Buddha is perfectly free from life and death. We call it *Nehan* or *Nirvana*. *Nehan* is divided into four classes: (1) The name given to the nature of Buddha which has neither beginning nor end and is entirely clear of lust like a perfect mirror. But such an excellent nature as I have mentioned is not the peculiar property of Buddha, but every being in the world has just the same constitution. (2) The name given to the state, little advanced from the above, where we perceive that our solicitude is fleeting, our lives are inconstant, and even that there is no such thing as Ego. In this state our mind is quite empty and clear, but there still remains one thing, the body. So it is called *Uyo*, or something left. (3) The state in which our body and intellect come to entire annihilation and there is nothing traceable,

therefore this state is called *Muyo*, or nothing left. (4) The state when we get perfect intellectual wisdom. We are not any more subject to birth and death. Also we become perfectly merciful; we are not content with the indulging state of highest Nirvana; but we appear to the beings of every class to save them from prevailing pains by imparting the pleasure of Nirvana. Out of these four classes of Nirvana the first and last are called the Nirvana of Mahayana, the Greater Vehicle, while the remainder are that of Hīna Yāna, the Lesser Vehicle."

We must of course take into consideration, in this quotation, the imperfection of the English. But the curious thing about it is that the views here ascribed to the Hīna Yāna, can not be found, so far as we know, in any Hīna Yāna book And this difficulty does not seem to have occurred to the learned author, who also distinctly states that the Mahā Yāna books (really many centuries later) were compiled by the disciples of the Buddha, meaning no doubt his personal followers. It will be very interesting to be able to trace how these notions passed through the intermediate stages between the doctrine of the Piṭakas and the doctrine here set forth. I have not time now to discuss the resemblances and differences which are involved, but it will be apparent to you all how different is the tone of the pas-

sage I have just quoted from the passages I have had occasion to read from the Buddhist Piṭakas themselves.

Another excellent result which may, and I hope will, follow from our increased acquaintance with the actual thoughts and literature, as well as with the personalities of Oriental peoples, is a loosening of that prejudice which undoubtedly obtains, even among scholarly circles, in the West. It would be perhaps too much to complain that classical scholars, for instance, should have a decided repugnance to admit any actual influence on Greek thought or institutions as having been exercised by the thinkers of the East, however ungrudgingly that privilege is conceded to Egypt. Personally I think that they are quite in the right in maintaining that such an influence is, except in a few instances, at present entirely unproven. But surely there are many points of analogy which are most instructive, and suggestive at least of more than an analogical connection; points that may throw light upon the natural course of the evolution of human conceptions and, in doing so, help to throw light on dark corners of the history of that culture out of which our own has arisen. It is a common saying that it is impossible to know any one language well without at the same time knowing another, and I venture to think that

a similar remark holds good of the history of religion or of ethics, or of institutions, or of philosophy.

Should I be considered too bold if I were to go one step farther and suggest that there are really some points in the philosophy of the East, and especially of India, which are fated sooner or later to find their place in, and to exercise a not inconsiderable influence over, the thought of Western nations. I know it is a common idea, and one held not only by Philistines, that the study of Buddhism, for instance, is of no use except as a matter of curiosity, since it has no connection with the origins of our own culture, which is, after all, in the commonly accepted opinion, the only progressive culture in the world. This view not only entirely ignores the value of the comparative study of all historical questions, but it ignores also, with an almost wilful ignorance, the real originality of Gotama's ethics and philosophy.

But this, I know, is not the view which is held by those I have the honour of addressing, or indeed by some of the most unprejudiced and original leaders of thought in Europe. You all know how Schopenhauer claims to have arrived, in the very deepest foundation of his system, at a practical agreement with Buddhism, and he writes, alluding to other thinkers:

"If I am to take the results of my philosophy as the standard of truth, I should be obliged to concede to Buddhism the pre-eminence over the rest. In any case it must be a satisfaction to me to find my teaching in such close agreement with a religion professed by the majority of men. This agreement must be all the more satisfactory because in my philosophising I have certainly not been under its influence."

These words are at least conclusive evidence to show that, so far as Schopenhauer is worth studying, the Buddhist philosophy is worthy of study also; and I need not stay therefore to point out the reasons which have led me to believe that Schopenhauer *was* influenced, not only by Vedantism, but also by Buddhism.

And with this great philosophical thinker I would also remind you of the words of the veteran leader of scientific thought in England, Professor Huxley, who, comparing Gotama's idealism with that of Bishop Berkeley, says, in one of his latest utterances:

"It is a remarkable indication of the subtlety of Indian speculation that Gotama should have seen deeper than the greatest of modern idealists."

And throughout his whole essay he insists very strongly on the value, even to actual belief in the West, of a critical study of the Buddhist system.

Dr. Deussen, Professor of Philosophy at Kiel, has even gone so far as to publish a handbook for students entitled *Elements of Metaphysics*, in which Indian thought is throughout compared and used, alongside with European speculation. And I know from your presence here to-day, that you at least will cordially agree with the committee representing centres of higher education in America, that the comparative study of religious belief (which must be very largely, and even mainly, the history of Oriental belief) has come to be a matter of real importance to Western students. It would be beyond the scope of a lecturer on this subject to touch upon the possible influence of its study upon the religion of the future. But it is a matter of historic fact that the great epochs of intellectual progress have been precisely those when two different and even antagonistic systems of thought have been fermenting in the same minds. The two systems are, as it were, the father and mother, whose progeny, more like, perhaps, to one of its parents, still possesses some of the characteristics of both, and escapes from the evil results of too exclusive and narrow an interbreeding.

We may at least venture to hope that the series of lectures, of which this course is only the first instalment, will do much to promote that feeling of respect for opinions we ourselves can never hold, which lends so much assistance to a right understanding of the causes at work in the evolution of thought and in the history of our race.

THE END.

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T. W. RHYS DAVIDS, LL.D., PH.D.

I. Buddhism: being a Sketch of the Life and Teachings of Gotama the Buddha With a Map (Small 8vo, London—Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. 1878) *Fifteenth Thousand* 2*s*. 6*d*.

"We do not know of any other work from which so fair and complete an account can be obtained of that wonderful religion which has so much in common with Christianity, and has numbered more adherents than any other religion in the world"—*Academy*

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III. Report on the Existing European Literature on Pāli and Sinjhalese in Transactions of the Philological Society, 1875, 1876 (London—Trübner & Co) 6*s.*

"In the Anniversary Address for 1875, Mr. Rhys Davids gave us a very interesting and almost complete summary of the work done by Pāli philologists up to that date, leaving very little for any one else to contribute."—*Report of the Philological Society for 1880.*

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VIII. Vinaya Texts; translated from the Pāli by T. W. Rhys Davids and Hermann Oldenberg. (3 vols. 8vo; Oxford—Clarendon Press, 1881–1885)

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XIII. The Hibbert Lectures, 1881; being Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as illustrated by some points in the History of Indian Buddhism. (8vo; London—Williams & Norgate, 1881) *Second Edition.*

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"For what I have said about Indian Philosophy I am particularly indebted to the luminous exposition of primitive Buddhism and its relations to earliest Hindu thought, which is given by Professor Rhys Davids in his remarkable 'Hibbert Lectures' for 1881, and 'Buddhism,' 1890 The only apology I can offer for the freedom from which I have borrowed from him in these notes is my desire to leave no doubt as to my indebtedness "—PROFESSOR HUXLEY in the "Romanes Lecture," 1893.

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