

OUTLINES  
OF  
BUDDHISM  
A HISTORICAL SKETCH

by  
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BY THE SAME AUTHOR  
BUDDHISM  
GOTAMA THE MAN  
A MANUAL OF BUDDHISM  
THE MILINDA QUESTIONS  
SAKYA, OR ORIGINS OF BUDDHISM



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TO  
**THE BELOVED DISCIPLE**

' . . . as the Blessed One's own son . . . ,  
' who like me kept the supreme Wheel of Dharma rolling ' .  
' . . . as a mother is he . . . ,

MAJJHIMA-NIKĀYA; SUTTA-NIPĀTA

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## PREFACE

I HAVE written this book at the suggestion of my friend Edmond Holmes, author of *The Creed of Buddha, The Headquarters of Reality*, &c. He has had the great kindness to read through the MS., and advise me and criticize. This service I gratefully acknowledge. If in part I have not carried out that advice, my gratitude to him is in no way thereby diminished.

C. A. F. R. D.

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## INDIA THE MOTHER OF BUDDHISM

**I**T was only about a century and a half ago that England and Europe began to use the word Buddhism (= Buddha-lore) as a name for the religion nominally professed in countries of southern, south-eastern and eastern Asia. Trade and treaties were opening up some of these countries in new ways to us, and we came to learn that, in this religion, the name was derived from a man whom the adherents best knew by the name of Buddha, that is, enlightened, wise, wake, or by the linguistic derivatives of that name, e.g. Bukkyo, Fo. A man of China will call the religion *Fo-chiao*; a man of Japan will call it *Bukkyo-shin*; but men of Siam, Burma and Ceylon will call it, they tell me, *sāsānā-Buddha*, *Buddha-bhāsā* and *Buddhā-gāmé*, respectively.

Indian literature down to medieval times spoke of adherents to Buddhism as Shākhyas, that is, men of the cult of the Sakyas or Sakkas, the northern clan to which the Founder and many first disciples belonged. They then spoke of them as Baudhdas, or Buddha-men, but the Founder retained the name of Shākya-muni, sage or prophet of the Sakyans.

Now whereas, save in a very limited area of east and north India, Buddhism has died out of India for nearly seven centuries, the testimony yielded by epi-

graphy, archaeology and the palm-leaf manuscripts of Ceylon and Burma combine to show that the present 'Buddhist' countries are, as to this cult, the daughters of the Indian cult of the 'Shākayas' of ancient India. It was there, in the valley of the Ganges, early in the sixth century B.C. (or late in the previous century), that the world-religion associated, not at the time, but a few centuries later, with the name of Buddha was born.

But so changed are these daughters of the changed skies, one and all, from the original Indian mother, in the various forms in which they have grown up, that had the first Sakyans slept till now and were now to visit Buddhist countries, they would not recognize their own teaching. This is a hardy thing to say, and Buddhists, especially those of South Asia, will contest it, so are they believing that they at least have handed down the original teaching in its 'pristine purity'. But herein their own scriptures do not support them. In the fact of changing there is nothing here that is singular. Indeed, that 'everything is ever changing' is a prime tenet in Buddhism as it now is. But such have been the circumstances in Buddhist change, that the real original teaching is perhaps harder to find than it is in other world-religions. Travellers and writers have shown how much present-day Buddhism is changed here and there from the relatively primary cult in the earliest scriptures of it which we yet possess. But the changes do not end there. It has yet to be understood how far these early scriptures—both those in a relatively early literary diction called Pali, and those in a later kind of Sanskrit—differ from fragments of yet earlier teaching,

left in, but not repeated and emphasized, as are the orthodox formulas, which we come upon mainly in the Pali books.

Just what do I mean?

In these fragments we come upon—

(a) sayings of, or in, agreement with the religion of cultured North India as taught in the day when 'Buddhism' was born;

(b) suggestions of a new expansion, not against, but in that religion. But in the main body of the older Buddhist scriptures we find a growing dissent from both (a) and (b).

This preponderant 'anti'-emphasis has given rise, owing to the very partial way in which men are yet conversant with those scriptures, to a belief that from the first, 'Buddhism' was wholly protestant and antagonistic to the accepted Indian religion of its birth-time. Many books have been written 'about Buddhism' based on this partial conversance. And much support has come from the prevailing ignorance, in Buddhist countries, of the great mass of the Sayings known as Suttas (in Sanskrit, Sūtras), hardly any portions of which till now have been made accessible to the general reader by translations into the various vernaculars. It is difficult to meet in Buddhist clergy, *i.e.* monks, with a familiarity with the contents of canonical scripture comparable with that of practically every Christian priest or minister with Christian canonical scripture. I have once met such a man—he was of Burma—and have heard of a few others. On the other hand, I have frequently encountered a curious unfamiliarity with much of the Pali Canon, even though there is everywhere in the monasteries a knowledge of

Pali. There appears to be a converseance with certain formulas, certain rules, certain 'suttas' and a few poems, but not more. I shall be glad to find this is no more the truth.

But a great movement is now afoot in most Buddhist countries (except Siam and Ceylon) to get the Pali scriptures translated into their languages and published. Burma has led the way and accomplished a portion; the states of South-East Asia: Laos, Cambodia, Tonking, are showing similar eagerness, and Japanese scholars 'are now engaged'; one of them writes, 'upon the translation of the Chinese Tripitaka (or Canon) into Japanese'. Public illiteracy (which is a slowly vanishing feature generally), the great bulk of the scriptures, the consequent cost of translated volumes and the time required to read will combine to retard the effect of this movement. But one day that effect will surely be very great, even as was, in Europe, the eventual effect of corresponding translations of the Christian scriptures.

However, I am not so optimistic as to think that a mere reading of translated scriptures in the mass is of itself sufficient to give an adequate knowledge of 'Buddhism'. That reading will make a man familiar with what the monastic editors at different times *have come to make* of the dimly remembered half-forgotten mandates handed down through the ages. If he wishes to get down to those mandates, if he would seek to dig up what the first Sakyans probably did teach, he must do more than skim through Rule after Rule, Sutta after Sutta, poem after poem, catechism after catechism. He must say to himself things like this: 'The oft-repeated, the formula, is not, as such, that which is

the most true, the most ancient.' And: 'The man who starts what became a world-religion:—what kind of New Word, speaking generally, is he most *likely* to have brought to men?' And: 'These teachings which don't somehow harmonize with the much repeated sayings: how did they get put in?' He must say all this to himself mindful of Rudyard Kipling's poignant lines:

*He that hath a gospel whereby heaven is won  
(Carpenter, or Cameldeer, or Māyā's dreaming son),  
Many swords shall pierce him, mingling blood with gall,  
But his own disciple shall wound him worst of all!*

It is to help the reader who gets so far as to ask these questions, and him also who does not yet ask them, that I have written yet one more book. He will see, or he should see, that in these pages he is not likely to get a treatment following and, in its brevity, summarizing the treatment followed by other writers' books on the same subject. This little book is more of the nature of a break-away from lines taken by others. In these it is the formulas which are made the framework of the treatment; the *clichés* are made important. Here both are put aside, because my readers and I are seeking what was there before they came on the scene.

My task has been:

- (1) to make clear the special phase in Indian religion which may be shown as having been the mother of primitive Buddhism;
- (2) to make clear the new expansion in that religion taught in primitive Buddhism;
- (3) to make clear what were the changes in values,

with their causes, which led to that new expansion taking a special line of actual expansion, along which Buddhism took shape in the two main divergent forms, as which we hear it spoken of to-day.

## CHAPTER II

## HOW INDIA NEEDED BUDDHISM

**T**HE earliest documents in which we can trace the nature of Indian religion are, I need hardly say, first, the Vedic hymns, hymns of the Rig, Soma and Yajur Vedas ; after that, the books of ritual called Brāhmaṇas ; later still, the oldest dozen or so of the 108 short collections called the Upanishads. These dozen are a little prior to or, in part, contemporary with, the day of the founders of Buddhism. They are long prior, in compilation, to the compilation of the Pali collections of Buddhist teachings. But as compilations (I cannot say writings ; they were not written till modern times), edited and included in a closed Canon, as they now are, I judge that they contain many glosses, due to changed values, even to Buddhist influence. To find this suggestion plausible, the reader must compare the changing values in the latest of the 'dozen' with the Pali scriptures.

Now there runs through these three literatures : Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, Upanishads, a quite wonderful evolution in religious ideas. In the Vedas man is believing in and worshipping Deity as certain external personal powers disposing of the material world and the destinies of mankind. In the Brāhmaṇas these personal gods have retired into the background. The central figure is the celebrant ; the man building his altar

with a manifold of measurements, sacrificing, and sanctifying all with the Word. It is this work or 'karma' at the altar which avails. He is shown as guiding, influencing his own destiny, anticipating his Luck. It is his mandating in certain fixed ways the powers that be which counts, more than the divine fiat itself. He rises to the position of one who compels the efficacy of the rite. He becomes *constrainer of the Unseen*.

And it is as having mind (*manas*, measuring) that he becomes compeller. In and with mind he seeks the self (we should say 'himself'); to mind he adds speech, breath, eye, ear and work: thus does he express the self and manifest the man.

In the Upanishads, we see the final evolution of this appreciation of manhood. The Man becomes *that who is worshipped*. The personal gods have become emanations of the One impersonal Being Brahman, a word which, whatever it originally meant, stood for prayer, then for the Object of prayer. This was to be sought inwardly, in the very man, the self, one in nature with the Highest. Man had been the 'disposed of', he was then the disposing, he was lastly the disposer. It was a *progressive revelation of a More in man*. And India has never lost sight of this More. The last development was not given in *popular* teachings, but these were taught to the flower of Indian youth, the sons of warriors and of celebrants or Brahmins. Who first uttered this final appreciation of the man we know not. If it had its Messiah, his name has not 'lived for evermore'. It may have been a teacher who in physical charm or in spiritual influence made no lasting impression on his day, as did the Founder of Buddhism. He lived on only in the way he inspired others to teach.

In this new mandate there was a subsidence of the man-in-the-mind, which we find in the Brāhmanas. Mind and body are more clearly recognized as the instruments only of the man, the self. Thus: 'it is the self that seizes hold of and animates this body' . . . 'it is "with the mind" truly that he sees . . .'<sup>1</sup> And 'he', 'the self', the man is one with Deity conceived as Self (= Ātman). Thus, e.g.: 'look at yourself in water . . . *that* is the Self, the immortal, the fearless, that is Brahman . . . *thou* art That'.<sup>2</sup>

This tremendous saying was not to be accepted lightly. The transcendent possibilities in man's nature claimed for him were such, that he was taught 'The Self should be sought after. It should be desired-to-be-understood.'<sup>3</sup> The overcoming of all less worthy desires, the reaching the goal of that supreme quest:—this aim of life seen as a whole, for it was nothing less—was figured as a Way (*mārga*): 'an ancient way touched, found by each man', a way leading to Brahman.

There was, moreover, the open door here to religious ethics. Thus: 'one should reverence the Self alone as dear; not for love of men are men dear; for love of the Self are men dear'. For the Self is in and of the other man as well.

Herein and herein alone is the matrix from which proceeded Buddhism. We must put aside the modern Western ideas of God as external to man, and of 'self' as being 'egoistic'. These last two terms have crept into our own religious and ethical ideas within the last two hundred years bearing the meaning of our baser

<sup>1</sup> *Bṛhad*: Up. 1, 5, 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Chānd*: Up. 8, 1-3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*: *Maitri* Up. 6, 8.

self only, and of 'being selfish', that is, regardless of the interests and welfare of others. But there was *nothing of this in the Indian idea, nor was there any atheism.* The self was understood as the inner ideal of what one might, what one ought, to be. It may be clearer to us if, for self, we say 'spirit'; and in 'spirit' blend the idea 'Holy Spirit'. 'God'; as we say, had as it were 'come to dwell within' the man, worded as Atman or self. The reader will never understand Indian or Buddhist religion if he lose sight of this. The Christian sees the believer as son of God, by adoption through the Holy Spirit. The Indian sees the believer as God. Both are very great mandates. And in the Christian mystics both tend to merge in one. 'My God is me,' said St. Catherine of Genoa, 'my being is God, not by simple participation, but by a true transformation of my being.'<sup>1</sup> And others could be quoted. But the word of John the Elder: 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God; and such we are' . . . 'Dearests, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be . . .' remains the typical attitude of the sincere Christian. In that attitude he has come, perhaps through excessive humility, to revile his humanity, so far is the 'ought to be' from the 'is'. In loathing sin, he has erred in degrading the sinner, potential son of God. But the heir of the Upanishad teaching is never blind to the possibilities nascent in his nature. In exulting therein, he seems to the Christian to lack the humility which keeps ever in view his actual dis-

<sup>1</sup> So Mr. Edmond Holmes has more than once reminded us, e.g. in *The Headquarters of Reality*, p. 148.

tance from his potential self. But he never forgets, that the potency is not a gift from That to this, but is of his very nature.

If the reader will quite put away from him our modern depreciation of 'self', and concentrate on the wonderful More revealed to man in both cults, Eastern and Western, he will be the gainer.

Now it was with the matter of those 'possibilities' of development that Buddhism, as an expansion of the Brahmanic teaching, sprang to birth.

(3) In it we do not find each man taught as willing, as deciding this very How for himself. The student, save in one unique Upanishad,<sup>1</sup> is being passively guided.

(4) In it, when man is declared dear to man because of the common Divine Selfhood, we do not find that which is involved in this made clear, namely, that each man is bound to ward and cherish each, because of That Who in both is most precious.

(5) In it we find the great solution, namely, that the Actual and the Ideal are in nature One, guessed at, felt after, but we also find herein a faltering, a letting go, and another way of attainment put in place of what was felt after. This way was called Yoga. The solution of 'Becoming-by-Living' gave way to 'Effort-to-unite-with'. The dawning vision, of Man as becoming rather than as being, faded.

I shall now the better be able to show how, in this fivefold weakness, the first clear call of Buddhism sought to expand, to remedy, to buttress.

And first, let it be kept in view, that then, for the first time in India man as *one in a company* was taking his gospel in both hands out from the School, the Few, the Intelligentsia, to the Market, the Many, the Everyman. He was no more addressing himself to the student of the sheltered life and the 'long, long thoughts' of youth. He was come to talk with the man at the plough, with the mother in the home, with folk for whom death lay nearer and realities mattered much. The folk were waiting for him and they taught him much. What was it that he in a corporate way tried to teach them?

<sup>1</sup> The *Katha*.

### CHAPTER III

#### WHAT BUDDHISM TRIED TO DO

**W**HEREIN was it that the earlier religious reform—that of God as immanent in man—needed expansion? I find it in five ways.

(1) In that 'God-in-Man' we are mainly confronted by two extremes: the Actual and the Ideal, namely, by Man as he actually is, and by God conceived as the essence of perfection in man. We have the top of the scale of humanity and we have the bottom. We have Being as it is, and Being as it might be. On the one hand we have a 'so far'; on the other we have a Most, a Highest, a Best. But there is no clear gospel of the Man as in a More, a Higher, a Better. We have a supreme Goal; we have Man as having set out for that Goal. But that he is travelling towards it, and how he should be travelling towards That is nowhere brought to the front. What is Man, as A and Z, as Alpha and as Omega, doing, as being also the intervening letters of life's alphabet?

(2) In it we see no emphatic guidance for the God-in-Man as being just here and now in the harness of a limited body and mind. What sort of life should result from this Immanence? To what does it next lead? We find scarcely anything about this; we hear only to what It ultimately leads. How is the Potential to be made Actual?

This : that man was to spend himself on heeding and reducing the 'More' which stretched between him and the 'Most'. He was to work at making the potential in his nature the actual. *We* have these two terms from the Greek. India had no such terms then to conjure withal. In a way she developed much later one (inverted) equivalent in '*shakti*'. At that earlier date she had to word this gospel without them. We see her using, instead, her great word 'become'; the verb *bhū*, in its many forms. Especially the causative form : 'make become', rarely used till early Buddhism brought it to the front. Buddhism taught that man's nature is not so much a being as a becoming, a coming to be, yes, and a making to become.

Now this idea India, as I said under (5), had been feeling after. The use of *bhū*-words in the early Upanishads shows a startling increase over the use of them in those earlier literatures. The reader will not get this, as he should, out of translations, because translators have too often rendered the *bhū*-words by words for 'being', 'happening' and the like. This is probably because we have mainly dropped our own great Saxon words for becoming. Dr. R. E. Hume's translation<sup>1</sup> is at least a great improvement in mainly rendering the *bhū*-words by 'become' forms. The Upanishads went boldly to the logical results of their 'theory' (so far as it can, inchoate as it was, be called a 'theory'). If man was in nature divine, if man was by nature becoming, then becoming must belong to the nature of Deity. Yes, they said, creation is a becoming; when Brahman, the Self created, it was

<sup>1</sup> *Thirteen Principal Upanishads*.

a desire to become a More. Then we ask is Deity imperfect, that 'He' should so desire? No, they said, He was not yet (in this or that way) 'become'!<sup>1</sup> We see that we must get a properly adequate notion of becoming. A creative masterpiece in art is a becoming, or process of having come-to-be in the artist, but it is not an effort to become less imperfect, to become 'better'; it was a becoming other, becoming a new manifold. India got this idea later on in words, and spoke of creation as a 'play', a 'sport', of the Creator. But in the field of religion, becoming, for man as yet only potential, is a lessening his imperfection, is the attaining of a better. The way for him lies through a More towards a Most. Limited here and now he has to outgrow his limitations. The divine shoot in him has to be 'made to expand'.

Herein lay the message of the Buddhist teachers at the start. They were needed, for, as I said (5), the Brahman teaching had faltered. Becoming, growth in a More, failed to be adequately understood. 'Growth in things material, the body, the plant, was a thing involving a sequent decay. It could not therefore be truly an attribute of Deity, the main word for Whom had been Imperishable (*akshāra*). Surely Deity must be Being, not Becoming. Becoming was the work of Mind, rather than of very nature. The early notion of God creating by a fiery energy (*tapas*) was chilled, and God as creative Thought replaced it.' This led soon after to those visions of the world as Illusion, which we so much associate with Indian thought. Not mighty toil, but bliss was Deity's true attribute, and so the triad of qualities in Deity : Being, Thought,

<sup>1</sup> *Bṛhad : Up. 1, 4, 11-14.*

Bliss, which are still the Hindu creed, began to emerge. It was a strange and tragic thing, that Indian thought, which had so raised the nature of man, should have confused this, his spiritual immaterial nature, with the other and material nature of his visible instrument the body. Indian thought had, in those early Upanishad teachers, spoken of the very man discarding his decaying part, as the snake sloughs its skin, himself surviving in an undecaying adolescence. It was not they who faltered, but the later voices we hear reflected in the following Upanishads.

Buddhism faltered also, following the Brahmanic precedent. Some three centuries after the first Buddhist teachers we find the analogy of material 'becoming' as followed inevitably by material decay, put forward in debate to contest the older theory, that 'Man survives because of his Becoming'. But at first, it was the nascent Buddhism which took up the drooping torch of the teachers of the Few and told the Many, that for every man life was neither a 'being', nor a 'not being', but a becoming. These are words we actually find in the teaching, but the main fashion of telling it was to liken life to a Way, a Road, a Path.

We may, at seeing this, wonder that this figure, and not that of a plant, a perennial plant, such as a tree, should have been made the central symbol. The tree loses periodically its outward instruments of growth, but at its heart grows on for a relatively very long time. And it may be, the growth of the plant was never far from the first teachings. Man in his true nature: 'what is of You', ('is the very You', we might say) they are said to have likened to the wood, as compared with the underwood and fallen boughs,

borne thence for burning. Nay, it seems to have been the stages of growth in a pond of lilies or lotus which inspired the Founder to put away the mandates he had thought of as gospel, but despaired to get Every-man to listen to, and to take up the idea of growth, that is, of becoming, in men.

But in fact the Way was the better figure. The tree too comes to decay and fall, as its leaves have fallen. And typically the plant is stationary. As wayfarer the man is ever faring onward in the New, the before-unseen, the widened vista, the transformed horizon, the Goal at way's end, and this too: he wins the growing fitness in himself, the enriching his experience with a fresh manifold. Essentially is the Road the right figure for a teaching of man as in a More, faring towards a Most. The journey is an Adventure; so it was actually taught. The Adventurer needs faith; and faith in Buddhism is a leading desideratum. The end is not yet; it was a way through worlds, the wayfarer being ever the same yet changing, changing as the man of many travels is different from his parochial boyhood; changing because becoming what he was not before.

Here is the very gist of Buddhism. All else is accessory to this. Here is no student-dialectic. Here is practical pointing for the man in the world at grips with life. And the first teacher of it, exploiting in it the simile already vocal in the Brahman schools, became referred to as the 'Teacher of the Way', in a passage still apparently unknown to the majority of the Buddhist world. The cousin and loyal attendant of Gotama the Founder, Ananda, when the former had left the earth, was asked by a Brahman, whether the

