



— Om Mani Padme Hum! —

VOL. IV.] SANTA CRUZ, CAL., U. S. A., MARCH-APRIL, 1891. [NOS. 3-4.

## TRANSMIGRATION.

BY CARLO PUINI.

From the Italian by PHILANGI DASA.

**M**ETEMPSYCHOSIS, or, rather transmigration, is one of the fundamental dogmas of buddhism. Without a constant remembrance of this belief, many of the doctrines of this system, and many passages of its scriptures, will be unintelligible.

It has this dogma in common with the brahmanic system, and the theory of it is discussed in the Laws of Menu.—Lib. xii. sloka 30, et seq.

A striking difference between the metempsychosis, as understood in the old indian religion, and that of the buddhist (to which the term metamorphosis would be more applicable) is to be observed: according to the brahman's soul of a being, which is only a part of the Universal Soul, inhabits diverse bodies in its several existences, until, purged by innumerable transmigrations in all forms of creation, it returns to the Supreme Essence, from which it originally came forth: in which the being, like a drop of water that falls into the sea, becomes blended, loses its individuality, and becomes one with the divine substance of Brahma. (Also Pythagoras thought

that the spirit, upon the death of the body, occupies and animates another body.\*) The buddhist metempsychosis is not exactly the transmigration of the soul or spirit in different bodies—as with brahmans and pythagoreans: for the buddhist holds that, at death, the spirit perishes with the body, and that, with the complete dissolution of the individual, another being is born, which may be animal, human, or heavenly, according to the merits or demerits of his works in the life passed.

In the language of buddhism, then, transmigration is caused and regulated according to the efficacy of the merits or demerits: which is called Karma. But this efficacy is of such a nature that a being which has reached the end of life, does not transmit aught of his entity to the individual, at once causatively created by him: for, this last, newly formed being, is a distinct being, independent of him: created, it is true, through his merits or demerits, but having naught in common with its creator.

Karma, or the influence of the merits or demerits, produces a new creature, precisely in the way that fruit (or seed), be it good or bad, produces a tree altogether distinct from that upon which it grew.†

\*See Aristotle, "Treatise of the Soul," c. iii. 23.

†Bigandet, p. 21. Note.

The BUDDHA explained the doctrine of transmigration by a similitude, saying,—

"One lamp may be lighted by another. Both being lighted they appear distinct. But the second has its light from the first, and without it, could not have been lighted. A tree produces fruit, or seed, and from this grows another tree; and so, another life. The latter tree is certainly not the same tree as the former, but a consequence of it; not at all the less, the second could not have existed, had not the first.

The man is the tree: his works are the vital force of the works is Desire. Good and bad works qualify the fruit: so that the existence which is the outcome of these will be happy or unhappy: for the quality of the fruit influences the nature of the plant that grows from it."

Therefore, according to this theory, the [animal] mind of man has not formerly had existence in another form: it is rather an original mind, under the lordship of the passion and desire produced by good or bad works: the outcome of which, after death, is the growth of a new body and a new mind. In short, that which transmigrates, is not the spirit, the mind, the ego, but the *conduct* and the *character* of man. The living universe is therefore created by the works of its inhabitants: it is an effect.

The unlikeness of the buddhist transmigration and the brahmanic, is the result of their different doctrines touching beings and worlds, which obtain in the two systems.

With the buddhist, the spirit or soul, is not something independent of the body, that may, upon the dissolution of the latter, begin a new life in another mortal body. For the spirit, soul, or mind, is only a sixth sense, *manas*, which habits the heart; and the operation of it is like that of any of the other organs of sense: it is the outcome, the consequence of the animal organism, and disappears with it. But observe: when the substance, in virtue of Karma, re-organizes itself in another being, the soul re-appears with all the operations proper to it.

Herein lies the difference between the metempsychosis proper, of the brahmins and pythagoreans, and the transmigration of the buddhists.

And since the theologic and cosmologic ideas of these systems are diverse,

the manner in which the infinite series of enfleshments or rebirths end, is also diverse: the transmigration of the soul being at an end, the brahmins, who look upon the universe as an outflow from Brahma, reconduct it to him, from whom it once parted. And all being, absorbed by Brahma, loses its individuality: its ego. Buddhism, which does not admit this divine substance, this cosmic soul; which does not know an eternal god, creator of the world; and which, for the most part, considers every form of life, even that of a god, as wretched, could not return the living into the bosom of a universal soul, from which it might have been disjoined; nor could it give an individual existence—eternal, divine.

The soul, or that portion the individual, which perceives, thinks, and reasons, being, according to the buddhist metaphysics, closely bound to the organism, is not capable after death to have a proper existence, nor to re-invest an incorruptible body, fit to enjoy or to suffer everlastingly. It perishes with the body; and the unique, supreme happiness of the son of SAKYAMUNI, is that which, after the destruction of his being, does not give birth to another, but terminates with him the chain of transmigrations.

The individuality, the ego, of the buddhist, loses itself in the NIRVANA, which is the reverse of every kind of existence; it loses itself in the absolute NO-THING; as the ego of the brahmin loses itself in Brahma.\*

What is the cause of transmigration? What is the reason that beings are subject, are condemned, to this inflexible law?

The buddhist scriptures answer,—  
Because of impurity and sin!

They say,—

From the time he appears on this earth, man permits himself to be led by his desires, and seeks pleasures; and hence arise bad passions: lust, hatred, avarice; and he dives into every sort of sensuality, and does evil!

But how is this possible? How can he immerse himself in sensuality and sin, unless he has the proclivity in him?

\*Bigandet, p. 289.

The buddhists answer: All creatures have the proclivity in them; that which comes from sin they have in them, not yet extinct; and that they carry with them into the world into which they are born. The sin in the present world, is the outcome, the continuation of that of another world; and so on infinitely. Therefore, it is useless to ask, Whence the original sin? What was it? For the buddhist scriptures answer absolutely nothing. We are carried away by this original sin,—always pushed into the most remote past, into the most distant world antecedent to this;—but as to *whence* it came, and *why* it began, they are mum. But, suppose, for instance, they should have answered: "Man is condemned to transmigration because, in the beginning of the age, he disobeyed god;"—it would still remain to be answered, *why* he did so!

We might put some other questions to the buddhists: Does man, condemned to this series of rebirths, at his nativity, know the destiny that awaits him? By the works of the present life, can we judge what the nature of a man's future life will be: whether happier or unhappier than the present?

No; the buddhists are uncertain as to his (near) destiny. No one can tell what state, or what manner of life, awaits him in his next birth;\* or the Karma in him, the force of merits or demerits, which may lord him. Although his life may have been virtuous still there may be unexpiated sins and crimes of a former life, which, therefore, in his next birth, he may have to expiate. There is a final recompense for the good: but not until the termination of long and numerous existences.

Evil works, like certain diseases, are hereditary; especially if they continue through several living generations; and no one of these can with certainty be said to be fully expunged.

The buddhist might perhaps be said to die without hope.† But if so, he certainly dies without the fear of *eternal* torments: even if his bad works

cause him to be born among the damned in hell. For, according to the law of a continued alternation of life and death, of destruction and rebirth, he could escape neither heaven nor hell.

Nothing is eternal except the NOTHING, and the law that governs matter. Every world, being, plant, animal, man, and god, is from eternity, subject to change. Heaven with its gods, hell with its demons, will, like the earth, pass away: like it, be transformed. An everlastingness of reward, or of punishment, does not exist. Permanence obtains nowhere, save outside the circle of existence—in NIRVANA.

## STUDIES IN SCHOPENHAUER.

### II.

#### THE PHILOSOPHER.

"No man that is religious takes to philosophy; he does not need it. No man that really philosophizes is religious; he walks without leading-strings, dangerous but free." SCHOPENHAUER.

To be a philosopher is to be one among myriads, and that one chosen by nature, endowed by circumstances beyond his own control, gifted by inscrutable decree. Scholars and savants may, by acquired knowledge, by the toilsome accumulations of research and erudition, make themselves a lofty position and gain the crown which science bestows upon her votaries. But the true philosopher is a heaven-born king, invested by birth and nature with the royal prerogative. His, is not the method which, by slow education and calculation from premises of outward fact, painfully achieves some general conclusion. He is, as Novalis says of the artist, in the transcendent sense of that term, a magician, one that penetrates into the secret vital principle of things, and from within, by his potent wand, controls their outward movements. The genius—the great man whose life is the true benefit to humanity—is one who, unperturbed by passions, and undisturbed by petty detail, can see deeper than others behind the veil of circumstances, and catch glimpses into the permanent reality.

\*Swedenborg teaches the same.—Ed.

†Hardy, p. 396.

# The Buddhist Ray

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

DEVOTED TO THE LORD BUDDHA'S DOCTRINE OF ENLIGHTENMENT.

*Terms:* 50 cents a year, in advance; single copies, 5 cents. To foreign countries, belonging to the Postal Union, 12 cents additional postage.

All communications should be addressed to PUBLISHER THE BUDDHIST RAY, Santa Cruz, Cal., U. S. A.

Entered at Santa Cruz P. O. as Second Class Matter.

"THIS ANCIENT ONE [THE BUDDHA] IS OUR ANGEL, WHOM WE REVERE AND OBEY."—SWEDENBORG.



THE article, "Enter into Nirvana," in this issue, was written by Dr Faul Carus, the editor of the *Open Court*, Chicago.

—A Burmese Buddhist League lately organized, intends to send missionaries to Europe.

—"DEEDS always over-balance, and downright practice speaks more plainly than the fairest profession."—SOUTH.

—"How religion works: While a farmer at Skipback, Penn., was attending church, his horse froze to death outside."—*Chronicle*.

—"ON Sunday next a buddhist sermon will be delivered by the representative of the Propaganda, who is already well known amongst our societies; and it is expected that a buddhist monk will be present with his colleague probably in his robes. The Propaganda is active amongst spiritualists generally.—(London) *Light*.

—THE *Sentinel* of this city, speaking of a recent execution at San Jose, says: "This man, while under the influence of liquor legally sold to him, murdered his own daughter." In other words, the petty, drunken criminal is out of the way, and the great, sober criminal (the State), remains.

—A Vegetarian "Church" is to be established in Philadelphia, says the *Universal Republic*. One of the fundamental principles of the "church" will be, that life is sacred, and that therefore the shedding of blood, even though it be for the sake of providing food for the human race, is wrong.

—WE acknowledge hereby the receipt of the dutch and swedish translations of Subhadra Bickshu's "Buddhist Catechism." We have so far read the english, german, dutch, french and swedish translations. The japanese translation is now in the press.

—THE editor of the *Flaming Sword*, Chicago, says that the most irreligious, lying, drunken, lawless, and immoral libertines—rotten and dishonorable to the core—are the newspaper reporters. If so; what a field there is among us for the missionaries now sent to insult, for instance, the japanese—by treating them, a kindly, moral, and cultured people, as heathens and savages!

—"Stranger (in Brooklyn).—'Where are all those gentlemen and ladies going?' Resident.—'They are going to bid farewell to a popular missionary to Japan, who has been very succesful in teaching the heathens there the gospel of love and peace.' Stranger.—'I see. And where is this gang of boys going?' Resident.—'They are going to stone a chinese funeral.'"—*Weekly*.

—MR Moncure D. Conway has an article in the *Open Court*, in which he says: "We see 60,000,000 of american people content that a psalm-singing postmaster-general shall determine what books may or may not pass in the mails, providing he makes a pretext of preserving morality. The said postmaster may be pirating english encyclopædias, photographically counterfeited, at the moment he is damning books not on sale in his establishment; he has only to touch the moral nerve to paralyse that liberty of printing which is a chief corner-stone of all liberty."

—SPEAKING of marriage, the New York *Herald* says: "It is a law of this state that a valid marriage may be contracted by a man and a woman without the presence of minister, magistrate or witness; without any ceremony or formality other than their own agreement. No writing or record is essential; no publicity is required. Marriage and married life may be a secret." This law enables those that made it, with impunity, under the pretext of marriage, to seduce young girls.

## BUDDHISTIC QUIETISM.

BY BENYEU SAKYA.

(A Buddhist Monk of the 13th Cent., Japan.)

Translated from the Japanese, for the RAY,  
BY MASATOSHI OHARA.

The doctrine of Dhyana (Self-introspection) is the path to deliverance. All schools come from it; all virtuous deeds pass by it; all wisdom is derived from it; and the lives and natures of devas and men grow out from it. All the BUDDHAS are living safely in it; and all Bodhisatvas enter it by their works. Even those that believe in the Minor vehicle (doctrine), or in heathenisms, purpose, though without success, to enter this noble path. The founder of the school said: "All wise men, from the ten regions of the world, will [ultimately] enter it."

Question.—Why do you hold Dhyana to be the origin of all schools?

Answer.—Because it is the Heart of the BUDDHA; doctrine His conduct; teaching His words; and the repetition of His name (as is usual among those that believe in salvation through the power of another) is the only means that enlighten the disciple. All these devotions come from His heart. Dhyana, then, is the origin of all schools.

Q.—This doctrine rejects every outward form, and seeks the Divinity (the nature of the BUDDHA) *in* man: if so, how can It be recognized?

A.—Only in one way, namely; by enlightenment; which is gotten by Dhyana.

Q.—Would n't good works get us better results?

A.—A wise man of old said: "If any one practices Dhyana as well and as quickly as the TATHAGATA Himself, this practice will include all good works." If so, then, it includes all. Another saying is to the same effect: "All powers in us are subordinate to the Heart within us." Therefore, let a man work countless good works, without the attainment of enlightenment, he abides nevertheless in confusion and darkness. BUDDHA means the ENLIGHTENED. Without enlight-

enment, then, how can any one become a BUDDHA!

Q.—How are we to attain Buddhahood?

A.—He that hears this doctrine but once, attains enlightenment; for it is a noble path to deliverance. When he has successfully practiced Dhyana he becomes a BUDDHA, and this without a thought, being free from confusion and darkness. At the moment of that enlightenment he sees all things—apparently as the BUDDHA SAKYAMUNI did, for six years, at Himalaya, by the introspection of Himself. Before he enters this path, when he practices Dhyana for one hour, he is a BUDDHA of one hour; for one day, of one day; for one year, of one year; and for one life-time, of one life-time. The wise men of the world believe so.

Q.—What must we do to enter this path?

A.—The Divinity in us has no appearance, and is therefore not attached to external things. The Vagrasekhara sutra says: "All BUDDHAS are free from every outward condition and illusion." Hence, whether in walking, sitting, or lying down, we must concentrate our mind, and thus make it free from all wordly thoughts and ideas.

Q.—This practice seems very difficult, and hardly credible. May we not become BUDDHAS by reading scriptures, hearing sermons, observing precepts, and uttering the name of the BUDDHA AMITA?

A.—The true scripture, sermon, and repetition of His name are, after all, nothing but His Divinity; that is, they are as it were the guides to enlightenment for confused minds, which are unable in the true way, to discern the Divinity in themselves. The *true* scripture, sermon, and repetition of His name, are not those of book and speech but descriptions of the Divinity within every soul. Therefore, if we wish to see (or become) Divine Men or BUDDHAS, we must introspect ourselves; and need not read scriptures, hear sermons, and utter His name. If the things written or uttered can be called the *true* scriptures, sermons and repetition of His name, we need not intro-

spect ourselves. We shall feel warm when we utter, "Fire !" cool when we utter, "Air !" and satisfied when we utter, "Bread !" But, as we know, the mere mention of these, or other things procures naught. Even so, let a man read scriptures, hear sermons, and utter the BUDDHA'S name, it will never cause him to attain Buddhahood, unless, at the same time, he reads the *true* scriptures and hears the *true* sermon which is the Divinity in himself.

When we have introspected ourselves, and have attained Buddhahood, we have then gotten the Supreme Wisdom, which is called the Wonderful Sword of Wisdom, since it puts an end to the causes of birth and death.

Q.—How can we become BUDDHAS merely by the concentration of our mind ; thus without virtue and good works ?

A.—He that wishes to attain Buddhahood by virtue of his works, becomes, after countless ages, a BUDDHA ; but he that practices self-introspection, re-ascends at once his former Throne of Divinity.

Q.—Does he that practices Dhyana disclaim the virtue of good works ?

A.—No ; he does many good works—to interest others ; but not to attain Buddhahood. He places no merits in them.

Q.—If he does not think, how can he see the Divinity in himself, and get Supreme Wisdom ?

A.—He thinks right thoughts ; he does good works ; he does not desire to become a BUDDHA ; he is without confusion ; he spurns worldly delight ; and so does not seek honor and reputation. He neither loves nor hates ; and so, does not draw any line of distinction between himself and his neighbor. He abides in a state of "no-thought," and is therefore called the "ascetic of no-thought." To ignorants his path is an unknowable one.

Q.—All other buddhistic schools teach the virtue of good works ; but why do they not teach the virtue of "no-thought" ?

A.—The Bodhisatvas, who have attained enlightenment, know that it is incomprehensible to ignorants, and so

do not teach it. In the Saddharma-pundarika sutra we read : "Never preach this sutra among [wilful] ignorants ; for it cannot be understood by them ; only wise men can understand it." Although there are countless gates of the Law in the BUDDHA'S teachings, so that all living beings may enter, yet they may be summarized in two, namely ; 1. the Form, and 2. the Formless : the first being the body of the four elements (earth, water, air, and fire) and five skandhas (material qualities, sensation, abstract ideas, tendencies of mind, and mental powers) ; while the second is the character or nature of passions and enlightenment. As the first has external form, it is called the Form ; and, as the second is formless, it is called the Formless. Nothing but these two can be thought of, namely ; *Body* (with form) and *Mind* (without form).

Q.—Is this body of the four elements confused or enlightened ?

A.—Neither the one nor the other. All things appear temporarily, like a bubble or a mirage. Hence, you should not think about them. You should live in a state of "no-thought."

Q.—Also in the Minor vehicle we learn of "no-thought," enlightenment, and NIRVANA. Are these the same as those of the Major ?

A.—No ; the Arhat in the state of a Sravaka or a Pratyeka-Buddha, looks upon his mind and body as fetters ; destroys them, and becomes like a dead tree or an inanimate stone. Then he becomes a deva in the Formless state. This is not the Supreme Truth, but a fruit of the Minor vehicle, and is not the same as that of the "no-thought" of the Major.

Q.—Does, then, a Bodhisatva of the Major vehicle enter the path of "no-thought" ?

A.—No ; he cannot enter it before he has reached the highest of the ten stages, or full enlightenment ; for, before that time, he searches for a law. He enters, however, when he attains the perfection of NIRVANA.

Q.—You say that even a Bodhisatva is unable to enter this path. How then can an ordinary man enter it ?

A.—The Supreme Truth is indeed immeasurable. The ten stages of holiness and the three stages of intelligence are for ignorants represented as temporary. But a wise man, in the hour of devotion, finds himself in the splendid palace of full enlightenment of "no-thought."

Q.—Although you say that a man who introspects himself, and sees his Innermost Nature, or the Divinity in himself, attains at once to Buddhahood still, we see no signs of a BUDDHA about him: he has the body that we have; he is bound as we are; indeed, he manifests no signs of superiority. How do you account for this?

A.—Every man's body is the outcome of false thoughts, in former lives. So that though he sees the Divinity in himself, and attains enlightenment, still he is forced to continue the life in the body, and in his externals to appear as an ignorant. Nevertheless, he looks through the illusions of the six "dusts" (form, sound, smell, taste, touch and things), which the ignorants do not. He destroys the causes of birth and death, and becomes a BUDDHA; while the ignorants try to attain the highest goal by severe application to good works, or, by unjust, vicarious redemption. Finally, he delivers all living beings from their states of ignorance by the light of the Supreme Wisdom of his purest or Divine body; which they cannot do. All these supreme works and wisdoms have been acquired by himself, because he has meditated deeply, and put forth the effort of "no-thought"; has, by it, annihilated many ages, which he would have had to endure had he not entered this path, and become a self-introspecting BUDDHA.

Q.—How may a man become a self-introspecting BUDDHA?

A.—The knowledge derived through reading scriptures is called "buddhapragna," and is for ignorants. It is not true wisdom. But a wise man sees the Divinity in himself by the aid of reflection of . . .

Q.—Stop! What is meant by the Divinity in himself?

A.—All living beings have their Own Nature, without beginning and end: indestructible, ever-existing, and free from every change. This is the Original Body of the Law. From this body, divine light sheds its bright radiance over all things and illuminates the states of ignorance and darkness. But he that cannot see this infinite, bright light, continues fettered by the devil of passions; mistakes his false thought for the truth, continues to live in a painful body, and mistakes the seeds of selfishness for the cause of joyfulness.

Q.—Transmigration being produced by our wrong thoughts, does it cease when we find out its primary cause?

A.—Yes; every living being is daily confused by his false thoughts; and the Divinity in himself is hidden by the "dust" of passions, as the moon is hidden by a dark cloud. Therefore, when he finds its primary cause, and becomes enlightened, he is like the bright, unclouded moon. As a bright mirror clearly reflects all things; so he, though surrounded by many states and things remains clear or unconfused and pure; for he is truly enlightened.

Q.—Why should he practice the state of "no-thought?"

A.—Because it puts an end to every cause of transmigration. When we attain the state of "no-thought," we become BUDDHAS: TATHAGATAS beginningless and endless.

Q.—What is meant by the "Twice-great thought" and the "Twice-little thought"?

A.—By the former is meant the births and deaths from the beginning of the age, and the prevailing selfishness, anger, and ignorance. By the latter, the thoughts caused by one's surroundings. Even by self-introspection we are not sure to see the cause of transmigration, and to destroy the three poisons (selfishness, anger, and ignorance). But, when we see the cause, the passions, through which we have so long suffered, become enlightenment; the three poisons become the three precepts; transmigration becomes beginningless and endless NIRVANA;

and the six "dusts" become the six supernatural powers [of the buddhists].

Q.—He that has for a long time practiced self-introspection, has doubtless a pure mind and body; but how is a novitiate to free himself from false thoughts and worthless ideas?

A.—He should disregard them, and earnestly seek to find his Higher Nature. Because their mind is confused, most men hold this world to be full of illusions and impurities; notwithstanding this, it is in itself pure and real. As our awakening in the morning dispels our dreams, so our enlightenment dispels our darkness: the illusory things, once held to be realities, vanish like smoke, and we find ourselves in the midst of Nothingness.

Q.—What is meant by the saying that the "passions are enlightenment, and transmigration, NIRVANA"?

A.—The passions are made up of ignorance and darkness. The enlightenment is the Divinity or Higher Nature, inborn in every living being. Every living being that knows of the existence of the Divinity in himself, looks for It in outward things; and ignorance accounts for it. It sometimes happens that he who searches for It in himself, fails to become a BUDDHA, and sinks into hell, imagining himself one, though unenlightened, and boasts of himself among men. He reflects about himself and everything: fancies his heart to be what it is not, and so mistakes the false for the true. This is the seed of his transmigration. But, when enlightened, he sees his Higher Nature to be beginningless and endless, and finds himself in the eternal selfless state where neither love nor hate abides, neither good nor evil. Then he thinks naught, and is so to say, "mindless." But an ignorant, unaware of his Higher Nature, thinks wrongly and conceals It by his lusts. When we consider whence our lusts come, we find them fleeting, like dreams and phantoms. They are but illusions and mirages. They are not deeply fixed; they appear one moment and disappear the next, with our thoughts. They are bubbles or mirages on the surface of our Divinity. The bubble on the water is naught but

water; the mirage in the desert is naught but desert. Think of it! Even the passions become apparent; still, after all, they are naught but [appearances of] the Divinity in us. Therefore, when a man attains the throne of divinity, the wonderful light of wisdom becomes apparent; all things before him die away, like the flame of an unfed lamp, and he gains naught but the NAUGHT. As a dark cave, into which the sunlight has never penetrated, may be lighted by a lamp; and, as a dark night may be lighted by the moon, so every living being, whose mind is confused, may receive the rays of the light of wisdom, and spontaneously become pure, without the change of mind and body. That is the reason we say, "the passions are enlightenment, and transmigration, NIRVANA."

Q.—What would you say to him that has already attained Buddhahood?

A.—Similar are the rays of the light of wisdom which penetrate everywhere and every living being. The teachings of the scriptures are nothing but the finger which points to the moon. He that cannot yet see the moon, must look at that finger; but if he sees it, the finger is useless. So, when we are unenlightened, we must seek to attain Buddhahood by the aid of the scriptures, and when we obtain union with our Divinity we see at once, within ourselves, all that is written in the scriptures. For us, then, there is neither BUDDHA, man, animal, nor world; only Nothingness. We need not say anything to the fully enlightened.

Q.—What would you say to him that has reached Death's door without knowing the truth of "becoming BUDDHA by self-introspection"?

A.—There is transmigration because there is mind. Without this, there is no body to be born, and without thought, no ideas to be destroyed. In short, without mind and thought there is neither birth nor death. Like a dew-drop on a leaf, we are lordless. Wherefore, when anyone that is about to die, withdraws his thought from the existence of self, prepares himself for a natural "nothingness," and thinks neither of birth nor of death, but of "nothing," he is sure to enter the GREAT NIRVANA, into which all the BUDDHAS of the three worlds have already entered. Although every kind of good or bad illusion might appear before him, he should not mind it: for, if he does, he will not be free from birth or death. Therefore let him daily practice "no-thought." Beyond this, he needs have no concern. His duty lies wholly here.

[The Open Court.

## ENTER INTO NIRVANA.

THE RELIGION OF A FORERUNNER  
OF CHRIST.\*

The religion of the BUDDHA hinges upon the two ideas of *sansara* and NIRVANA.

*Sansara* is the bustle of the world ; it is full not only of vanity, but also of pain and misery ; it consists of the many little trivialities that make up life. It is the pursuit of happiness ; it is hunting for a shadow which the more eagerly it is pursued the quicker it flies.

The worldling lives in *sansara*. He imagines he proceeds onward in a straight line, yet he moves in a narrow circle without being aware of it. He hastens from desire to pleasure, from pleasure to satiety and thence back to desire.

The worldling eagerly tastes the pleasure, and if he can he tastes it to the last, he intoxicates himself with it, only to find out that it was not what he had hoped for. Pleasure if tasted to the last becomes stale ; it becomes staler than its symbol, the nectar of the grape that has been left in the glasses of toppers after a night's carousal.

What is the result of a life in *sansara*? Man's feet will become more sore and his heart will be full of disappointment. The buddhist says: The circular path of *sansara* is strewn all over with fiery coals.

Desire burns like a flame and satiety fills the soul with disgust. Enjoyment however, is the oscillation between both. Desire is want ; it is parching thirst and pinching hunger. It is destitution, poverty, dearth. Satiety, on the other hand, is not at all a preferable state. It is tedious and wearisome monotony ; it is life without a purpose. The fulfilment of want means an emptiness of aspirations, it

produces the nausea of maudlin misery and the absence of desire is felt as an actual torture. A longing rises in the heart for the thirst of an unsatisfied desire and thus the pendulum swings back to the place whence it came.

And happiness ! What is the happiness of a worldling? It is merely an imaginary line between both extremes. The pendulum that swings to a certain height on the one side will necessarily reach exactly the same height on the other. It does not come to rest in the middle. There is no escape from this law, and if a man of the world be prudent he will moderate the oscillations so as to diminish the misery. Not going to the highest pitch of desire, he will not be obliged to drain the cup of myrrh to the lees.

Why does mankind continue to move in the circular course upon the fiery coals of *sansara*? Because their eyes are covered with the veil of *maya* [illusion]. Individual existence, the buddhists say, is a sham, an illusion, a dream woven of the subtle stuff of sensations. Man imagines that his sensory world is full of reality. Buddhism teaches that the world of the senses is like a veil upon our eyes.

The veil of *maya* does not exactly deceive man ; on the contrary, the veil is the means by which man knows whatsoever he knows of truth. If the veil were not upon man's eyes, he would be blinded, as was Moses in the presence of [his] god. In itself the world of sensations is not a deceit, if it is not made so by being misunderstood.

The error, it is true, is natural. All errors originate according to natural laws ; so did, for instance, the ideas of the flatness of the earth and of the apparent motions of the heavenly bodies. But if we err, the fault is not with the facts that lead astray, but with us. We deceive ourselves by our own error. The veil of *maya* makes us feel our own being in contradistinction to that of all-existence; and this "we," the "I," the ego in its separateness is a self-deception. We live the dream of a pseudo-existence.

\*We repudiate the notion that the LORD BUDDHA was a forerunner of Jesus. The relation between them (if any exist) is that of teacher and disciple.—ED.

From the growth of the ego rise the self-seeking yearnings. Egoism begets egotism, and passions are the fruits of egotism. Passions produce pain and bring upon man the many evils of earthly miseries.

Is there no escape from *sansara*? Yes, there is! The illusion that considers individual being as a reality can be destroyed. The veil of *maya* can be lifted; which means, that its nature can be understood. In this way we shall recognize the error of egoism. There is no ego in the sense of a separate and individual existence, and with this truth it will dawn upon us that the regulation of action, as if there were an ego, is a fatal mistake. This mistake lies at the bottom of all the wretchedness of *sansara*, and we can free ourselves only, so teaches buddhism, by enlightenment, by understanding the truth, by abandoning the illusion. He who has attained enlightenment is a BUDDHA. BUDDHA means the Enlightened One.

The highest stage of buddhist perfection, the stage where a man becomes a BUDDHA is called NIRVANA. NIRVANA means extinction. As a flame is extinguished and ceases to be, so the *ignis fatuus* of the ego can also be extinguished. The egoistic error being extinguished, we enter NIRVANA.

NIRVANA means Peace; it means liberation from illusion, and thus brings a freedom of desire.

NIRVANA is not annihilation. It is the annihilation of error only; and in this respect it reveals to him who lives in NIRVANA, the higher life of true reality. In buddhist literature NIRVANA is sometimes characterized in its negative aspect as an extinction of sham-existence, and sometimes again in its positive aspect as the life of truth and immortality. It is often described in most positive terms as true happiness, as a state of perfect bliss, as living in the realm of eternity, where there is no pain, no misery, no death. This appears to be contradictory to its literal meaning, but it seems to me that it is not.

As soon as we recognize the error of individual existence, we lift ourselves

above the narrowness of egoism. We can in this state of mind contemplate our own fate from a higher standpoint; we can easily and do willingly give up our pursuit of happiness; we can live in this world as though we were not living. Our "we," our "I," our ego, the separateness of our individuality has ceased to be, and the life of the universe lives in us. We have become stewards of cosmic existence. In this way our joys as well as our pains are transfigured and a divine peace will inherit our souls that are now free from desire.

Pain, together with the vanity of pleasure, will diminish in the degree of the enlightenment attained. This is a law that is demonstrable in such exact sciences as physiology and biology. Our scientists inform us that the use of the sensory nerves blunts feeling and favors intellection. The highest sensory nerve, in which the intellectual element is comparatively most perfect, is the optic nerve. The retina of the optic nerve, while perceiving the differences of infinitesimally small fractions in ether-waves, has become insensible to pleasurable as well as to painful feelings.

The idea of NIRVANA, it must be said, is of a most dangerous character, if it is conceived as mere pessimism in its negative features alone. It will in that case lead to apathy, to destruction and death. Did perhaps GAUTAMA the BUDDHA Himself conceive NIRVANA in a spirit of negativism? Perhaps He did. At least it is certain that many of His disciples did; for the buddhism of the East has produced most fatal effects of indifference and retrogression upon those races that embraced its faith.\*

\*It is a mistake to think that the retrogression, or, rather, stationariness, of the asian nations in question, is owing to a mere mis-interpretation of the doctrine touching NIRVANA. The mental status of Persia, Egypt, Arabia, Spanish America, and other non-buddhist countries, is evidence to the point. No, the cause lies deeper than that: in the Egos of these peoples: in their Karma. Besides, only a few metaphysically inclined monks believe in nirvanic "nothingness;" not the large majority.—Ed.

If NIRVANA is conceived in its negativeness, buddhism will be a dualistic religion. In that case we have existence and non-existence, *sansara* and NIRVANA, sham-reality and nothingness. If, however, *sansara* is conceived as an illusion, and NIRVANA as the destruction of the illusion, we need not resort to the nihilistic world concept of a dual nothingness; we need not derive from the buddhistic premises the negative ethics of destroying life together with the illusion of egoism.

One of the most important truths proclaimed by the BUDDHA, was the doctrine that man can enter NIRVANA while he lives. When GAUTAMA had found redemption from the evils of existence, He resolved to announce His gospel to the world. He went to Benares and on the way He met one of His old acquaintances who asked Him:

What is it that makes you so glad and yet so calm?

The BUDDHA answered:

I have found the Path of Peace, and am now free from all desires.

Little interested in GAUTAMA'S bliss, His acquaintance further enquired where He was going; and we are told in the buddhist legend:

The ENLIGHTENED ONE answered:

I am going to the city of Benares to establish the Kingdom of Righteousness, to give light to those enshrouded in darkness, and open the gate of immortality to men.

He gave up fasting, for He looked upon the oppression of the body as a vain effort of conquering the evils of existence. He abandoned asceticism as a means of salvation.

It seems strange that Life can be gained only through annihilation of self; that immortality is possible only through the death of the transient and the happiness of eternal peace will come with the crucifixion of the desire for happiness. It seems strange, but it is not. However, it is natural that the deeper the truth is, the more contradictory it will appear to those who are prisoners still in the bondage of error.

The BUDDHA'S doctrines were misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misused. Yet they have given strength in temptation, comfort in misery, peace in tribulation, solace in death to many

millions of toiling, aspiring and suffering human hearts.

[Food, Home and Garden.

## CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM.

BY ALBERT SMITH.

I believe that the christian world has assumed a superiority of intellectual and moral development over the non-christian, that is not warranted by the facts. The strict buddhist comes nearer the following of Jesus, I believe, than the great majority of christians. The tiger-spirit of the beef-eating englishman gave him the power of the beast over the vegetarians of India; but the moral nature of the latter seems more pure than that of the former. We may feel unwilling to admit this, but I think that candid investigations will show it to be true.

If Jesus was an essene, as I agree with some writers in assuming, he was on that ground a vegetarian. But it is not necessary to make such an assumption for the maintenance of the principle.

The doctrines of Jesus involve purification of the flesh to effect purification of the spirit; and if it were not known to the early christians that animal food causes impurity of the spirit, I think we have, nevertheless, come to a time when it should be known.

But I am inclined to think that while Jesus had a good purpose in conforming to the rites of the old dispensation, as nearly as practicable for the new, he also purposed to lead away from the practice of eating animal food at the Passover, by the institution of what is called the Holy Supper in its place. The bread took the place of the lamb. He gave bread a symbolic significance as relating to purified flesh by calling it his body; which may be regarded as signifying that his body had been composed from the substance of bread, and not from the eating of flesh. He also gave an esoteric sense to the same symbol as relating to the purification of the spirit. Truth, which acquires its distinction from the false to the good

which is contained within it, is the proper food of the spirit ; and bread, in a higher sense than animal food, is the proper symbol of a purer form of truth ; which in Swedenborg's way of viewing it, thus becomes the symbol, or representative of good.

[Journal Hygieo-Therapy.

### MEDICAL DELUSIONS.

BY A. M. ROSS, M. A., M. D., F. R. S. I.  
ETC., ETC.

The history of medicine is rife in delusions which compress each other in grotesque successions from the earliest ages to the present time. One hundred and forty years ago, Dr Sydenham, of England, called the "english Hippocrates," prescribed the following dainties, in which he was followed by the medical profession of England :

Hog's lice, vipers' flesh, dried human flesh, the heart of a mole, crane's eyes, the excrement of sheep and dogs, powder of burnt owls and swallows, blood of black cats and white puppies, and spittle of a reigning [syphilitic and scrofulous] king.—Sydenham's "Praxis Medica," pp. 151-4.

Other filthy, absurd and criminal delusions follow in succession, down to the Montague craze of "inoculation with smallpox," the Jenner craze of "vaccination with pus from diseased cows." This craze, on account of its emolument, still holds high carnival. The "purging craze," the "sweating craze," the "vomiting craze," the "calomel craze," the "blistering craze," the "bloodletting craze," the "blue glass craze," the "Pasteur hydrophobia craze," the "Brown-Sequard elixir of life craze," the "cod liver oil craze," the "inhalation craze." And now, last, but not least, comes the "Koch tuberculosis craze," that bids fair to addle the brains of the profession until some new delusion is started on its round of fetish worship, and Koch and his delusion have been consigned to the same tomb with other delusions.

O tempora, O mores !

"What fools we mortals be !" When medicine becomes a science we shall have done with medical delusions, and accept the truth that there is no law of

cure in the universe ; that the remedial forces of nature are the crown and foundation of all curative processes ; and that the only condition of cure is obedience to the laws of nature.

[We agree with the learned physician and naturalist as to the rampant delusions and veritable regular chinese quackery of the majority of the orthodox medical profession—having been victims of it ; but we disagree with him when he says that "there is no law of cure in the universe": we think Hahnemann's "*similia similibus curantur*," proves that there is—having been benefitted through it. Our health-rules are very simple : abundance of pure (mountain) air and spring water ; abstinence from alcohol and the flesh of animals ; avoidance of crowded places and human vampires ; hot-air baths followed by cold douches ; and, in an emergency, a dose of homœopathic medicine.—ED. RAY.]

### KARMA.

"The sky is clouded, the rocks are bare !  
The spray of the tempest is white in air ;  
The winds are out with the waves at play,  
And I shall not tempt the sea to-day."

"The trail is narrow, the wood is dim,  
The panther clings to the arching limb ;  
And the lion's whelps are abroad at play,  
And I shall not join in the chase to-day."

But the ship sailed safely over the sea,  
And the hunters came from the chase in  
glee,  
And the town that was builded upon a rock,  
Was swallowed up in the earthquake shock.  
—BRET HARTE.

"Thou oughtest to be nice, even to superstition, in keeping thy promises ; and therefore thou shouldst be equally cautious in making them.—FULLER.

"SWEDENBORG THE BUDDHIST OR THE HIGHER SWEDENBORGIANISM, ITS SECRETS, AND TIBETAN ORIGIN." By Philangi Dasa. 322 octavo-pages.

"An interesting and valuable book. —*The Path*.  
"A very excellent compendium of the Esoteric Doctrine."—*The Theosophist*.

"Interesting, spirited and instructive."—*Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

THE BUDDHIST RAY.—Unbound copies of the 2d (1889) and 3d (1890) vols. can be had at 50 cents a vol. The 1st vol. is out of print.