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BUDDHIST CATECHISM

*According to the Canon of the Southern
Church*

BY

HENRY S. OLCOTT

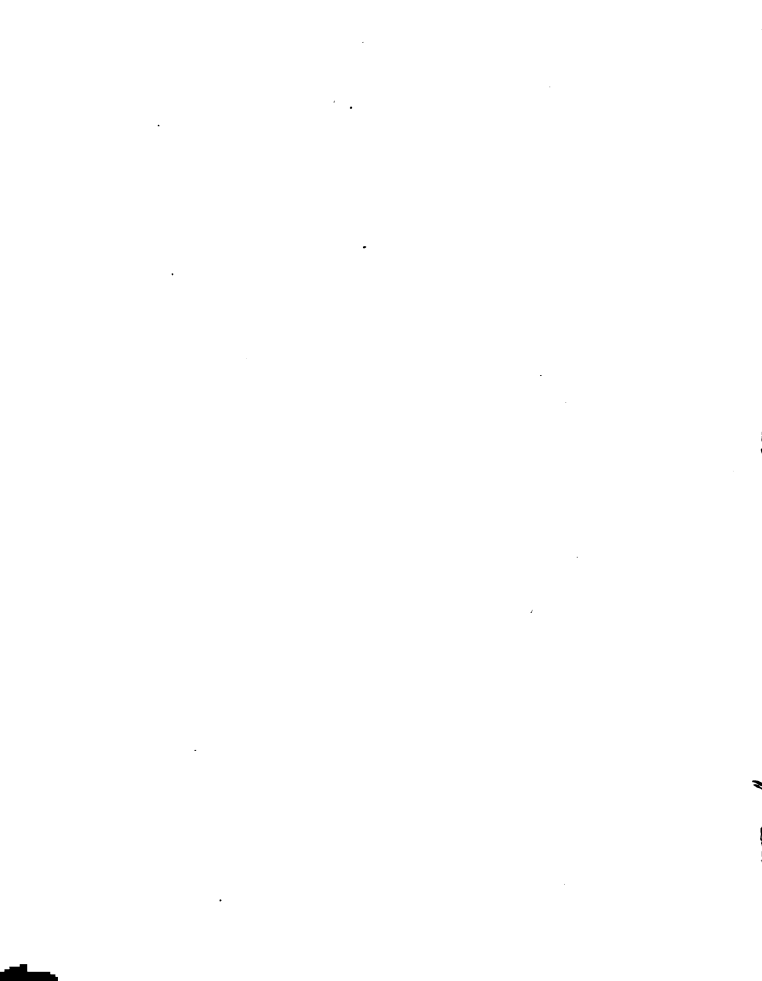
PRESIDENT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, ETC.

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NAMO TASSA BHAGAVATO ARAHATO SAMMA SAMBUDDHASSA.

A BUDDHIST CATECHISM,

*According to the Canon of the Southern
Church,*

BY

Steel

HENRY S. OLCOTT,

PRESIDENT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, ETC.

Approved, and recommended for use in Buddhist
schools by H. SUMANGALA, High Priest of
the Sripada (Adam's Peak) and Galle, and
Principal of the Widyodaya Parivena
(Buddhist College.)

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CERTIFICATE.

WIDYODAYA COLLEGE,
Colombo, 7th July, 188

I hereby certify that I have carefully examine the Sinhalese version of the Catechism prepared by Col. H. S. OLCOTT, and that the same is in agreement with the Canon of the Southern Buddhist Church. I recommend the work to teachers in Buddhist schools, and to all others who may wish to impart information to beginners about the essential features of our religion.

H. SUMANGALA,
*High Priest of the Sripada & Galle, and
Principal of Widyodaya Parivena.*

NOTICE.—*This Catechism is published, in the English and Sinhalese languages, at the expense of MRS. FREDRIKA CECILIA DIAS ILANGAKOON, F.T.S., of Matara, Ceylon; who makes the offering as a contribution to the cause of religion and a tribute of affection to the Theosophical Society.*

P R E F A C E .

BEING intended for the use of beginners, this little work aims only to present the main facts in the life of Gautama Buddha and the essential features of his Doctrine. Strange to say, it is unique of its kind in Ceylon, notwithstanding that the Missionaries have scattered their Christian Catechisms broadcast in the Island, and for many years have been taunting the Siphalese with the puerility and absurdity of their religion. To whatever cause it may be due this apathy is something to be deplored by every Buddhist or admirer of the Buddhist philosophy. The present Catechism is largely a compilation from the works of T. W. RHYS DAVIDS, ESQ., Bishop BIGANDET, Sir COOMARA SWAMY, R. C. CHILDERS, ESQ., and the Revs. SAMUEL BEAL and R. SPENCE HARDY ; in a few cases, their exact language has been used. But having been assisted by the Venerable High Priest H. SUMANGALA, Principal, and the Priest H. DEVAMITTA, of Widyodaya College, the author's treatment of some of the subjects will be found to differ from that of those authors in some respects. Truth to say, a very incomplete popular notion of what orthodox Buddhism is seems to prevail in Western countries. The folk-lore and

fairly stories upon which some of our principal Orientalists, cited above, have mainly based their commentaries, are no more orthodox Buddhism than the wild monkish tales of the middle ages are orthodox Christianity. Deeper analysis will unquestionably prove to Western scholars that the Kapilavastu Sage taught, six centuries before the Christian Era, not only a peerless code of morals, but also a philosophy so broad and comprehensive as to have anticipated the inductions of modern research and speculation. The signs abound that of all the world's great creeds that one is destined to be the much talked-of Religion of the Future which shall be found in least antagonism with nature and with law. Who dare predict that Buddhism will not be the one chosen?

Though the author gratefully acknowledges his obligations to Messrs. E. F. PERERA, Proctor, W. D' ABREW, and D. D. DE S. JAYASINGHE, for their services as interpreters between the reverend priests and himself, yet he claims the indulgence of all who have tried to do such work as this through intermediaries, for the many imperfections, that will doubtless be found in the following pages. His ignorance of Pali and Sinhalese has prevented his doing full justice to the subject, but he hopes to avail in future editions, of the criticisms the present one may call forth.

A BUDDHIST CATECHISM.

1. Q. *Of what religion are you?*
A. The Buddhist.
2. Q. *What is a Buddhist?*
A. One who professes to be a follower of our Lord Buddha and accepts his doctrine.
3. Q. *Was Buddha a God?*
A. No.
4. Q. *Was he a man?*
A. In form a man; but internally, not like other men. *
5. Q. *Was Buddha his name?*
A. No. It is the name of a condition or state of mind.
6. Q. *Its meaning?*
A. Enlightened; or, he who has the perfect wisdom.
7. Q. *What was Buddha's real name, then?*
A. Siddartha Gautama, Prince of Kapilavastu.
8. Q. *Who were his father and mother?*
A. King Sudhodana and Queen Maia.
9. Q. *What people did this King reign over?*
A. The Sakyas; an Aryan tribe.

* See definition of "Bodhisat" below,

10. *Q. Where was Kapilavastu ?*

A. In India, 100 miles north-east of the city of Benares, and about 40 miles from the Himalaya mountains.

11. *Q. On what river ?*

A. The Rohini; now called the Kohana.

12. *Q. When was Prince Siddartha born ?*

A. 623 years before the Christian era.

13. *Q. Did the Prince have luxuries and splendors like other Princes ?*

A. He did: his father, the King, built him three magnificent palaces, for the three Indian seasons, of nine, five and three stories respectively, and handsomely decorated. Around each palace were gardens of the most beautiful and fragrant flowers; with fountains spouting water, the trees full of singing birds, and peacocks strutting over the ground.

14. *Q. Was he living alone ?*

A. No: in his sixteenth year he was married to the Princess Yasodhara, daughter of the King Suprabuddha. Many beautiful maidens, skilled in dancing and music, were also in continual attendance to amuse him.

15. *Q. How, amid all this luxury, could a Prince become all-wise ?*

A. He had such a natural wisdom that when he was but a child he seemed to understand all arts and sciences almost without study. He had the best teachers, but they could teach him nothing that he did not seem to immediately comprehend.

16. Q. *Did he become Buddha in his splendid palaces?*

A. No, he left all, and went alone into the jungle.

17. Q. *Why did he do this?*

A. To discover the cause of our sufferings, and the way to escape from them.

18. Q. *It was not selfishness that made him do this?*

A. No; it was boundless love for all creatures, that made him sacrifice himself for their good.

19. Q. *What did he sacrifice?*

A. His beautiful palaces, his riches, his luxuries, his pleasures, his soft beds, his fine dresses, his rich food, his kingdom; he even left his beloved wife and his only son.

20. Q. *What was this son's name?*

A. The Prince Rahula.

21. Q. *Did any other man ever sacrifice so much for our sake?*

A. Not one: that is why Buddhists so love him, and why good Buddhists try to be like him.

22. Q. *How old was he when he went to the jungle?*

A. He was in his 29th year.

23. Q. *What finally determined him to leave all that men usually love so much, and go to the jungle?*

A. A deva * appeared to him when driving out in his chariot, under four impressive forms, on four different occasions.

* See definition of "Deva" below.

24. *Q. What were these different forms ?*

A. Those of a very old man broken down by age, of a sick man, of a decaying corpse, and of a dignified hermit.

25. *Q. Did he alone see these visions ?*

A. No, his attendant Channa also saw them.

26. *Q. Why should these sights, so familiar to everybody, have caused him to go to the jungle ?*

A. We often see such sights ; he had not, and they made a deep impression on his mind.

27. *Q. Why had he not also seen them ?*

A. The Astrologers had foretold at his birth that he would one day resign his kingdom and become a Buddha. The King, his father, not wishing to lose his son, had carefully prevented his seeing any sights that might suggest to him human misery and death. No one was allowed to even speak of such things to the Prince. He was almost like a prisoner in his lovely palaces and flower-gardens. They were surrounded with high walls, and inside everything was made as beautiful as possible, so that he might not want to go and see the sorrow and distress that are in the world.

28. *Q. Was he so kind-hearted that his father feared he might really want to sacrifice himself for the world's sake ?*

A. Yes, he seems to have felt for all mankind so strong a pity and love as that.

29. *Q. And how did he expect to learn the cause of sorrow in the jungle ?*

A. By removing far away from all that could prevent his deeply thinking of the causes of sorrow and the nature of man.

30. *Q. How did he escape from the palace?*

A. One night when all were asleep, he arose, took a last look at his sleeping wife and infant son; called Channa, mounted his favourite white horse Kantaka, and rode to the palace gates. The devas had thrown a deep sleep upon his father's guards who watched the gate, so they heard not the noise of his horse's hoofs.

31. *Q. But the gate was locked, was it not?*

A. Yes; but the devas caused it to open without the slightest noise, and he rode away into the darkness.

32. *Q. Whither did he go?*

To the river Anoma, a long way from Kapilavastu.

33. *Q. What did he then do?*

A. He sprang from his horse, cut off his beautiful hair with his sword, and giving his ornaments and horse to Channa, ordered him to take them back to his father, the King.

34. *Q. What then?*

A. He went afoot towards Rajagriha, the capital city of Magadha.

35. *Q. Why there?*

A. In the jungle of Uruwela were hermits—very wise men, whose pupil he afterwards became, in the hope of finding the way to Nirvana.

36. *Q. Of what religion were they?*

A. The Hindu religion: they were Brahmans.

37. *Q. What did they teach?*

A. That by severe penances and torture of the body a man may acquire perfect wisdom.

38. Q. *Did the Prince find this to be so?*

A. No, he learned their systems and practised all their penances, but he could not thus discover the reason for human sorrow.

39. Q. *What did he then do?*

A. He went away into the forest near a place called Buddha Gaya, and spent several years in deep meditation and fasting.

40. Q. *Was he alone?*

A. No, five companions attended him.

41. Q. *What were their names?*

A. Kondanya, Bhaddaji, Wappa, Mahanawá, and Assaji.

42. Q. *What plan of discipline did he adopt to open his mind to know the whole truth?*

A. He sat and meditated, shutting out from his sight and hearing all that was likely to interrupt his inward reflections.

43. Q. *Did he fast?*

A. Yes, through the whole period. He took less and less food and water, until it is said, he ate scarcely more than one grain of rice or sesamum seed a day.

44. Q. *Did this give him the wisdom he longed for?*

A. No: he grew thinner and thinner in body and fainter in strength, until, one day, as he was slowly walking here and there and meditating, his vital force suddenly left him and he fell to the ground, unconscious.

45. Q. *What did his disciples think of that?*

A. They fancied he was dead, but after a time he revived.

46. *Q. What then ?*

A. The thought came to him that knowledge could never be reached by mere fasting or bodily suffering, it must be gained by the opening of the mind. He had just barely escaped death from self-starvation but had not obtained the Perfect Wisdom. So he decided to eat, that he might live at least long enough to become wise. He therefore received some food of a nobleman's daughter, who saw him lying at the foot of a nuga tree. After that his strength returned to him; he arose, took his alms-bowl, bathed in the river Niranjara, ate the food, and went into the jungle.

47. *Q. What did he there ?*

A. Having formed his determination after these reflections, he went at evening to the Ajapala tree.

48. *Q. What did he do there ?*

A. He determined not to leave the spot until he attained the Buddhahip.

49. *Q. At which side of the tree did he seat himself ?*

The Eastern side. *

* No reason is given in the canonical books for the choice of this side of the tree, though an explanation is to be found in the popular legends upon which the books of Bishop Bigandet and other European commentators are based. Translated into the simpler garb of scientific language it might be thus rendered : There are always certain influences coming upon us from the different quarters of the sky. Sometimes the influence from one quarter will be best, sometimes that from another quarter. This time the influence towards the East was best, so he sat at the Eastern side.

50. *Q. What did he obtain that night?*

A. The knowledge of previous births, of the causes of rebirth, and the way to extinguish desires. Just before the break of the next day his mind was entirely opened, like the full-blown lotus flower; the light of supreme knowledge, or the Four Truths, poured in upon him; he had become Buddha—the Enlightened, the All-knowing.

51. *Q. Had he at last discovered the cause of human misery?*

A. At last he had. As the light of the morning sun chases away the darkness of night, and reveals to sight the trees, fields, rocks, seas, rivers, animals, men and all things, so the full light of knowledge rose in his mind, and he saw at one glance the causes of human suffering and the way to escape from them.

52. *Q. Had he great struggles before gaining this perfect wisdom?*

A. Yes, mighty and terrible struggles. He had to conquer in his body all those natural defects and human appetites and desires that prevent our seeing the truth. He had to overcome all the bad influences of the sinful world around him. Like a soldier fighting desperately in battle against many enemies, he struggled: like a hero who conquers, he gained his object, and the secret of human misery was discovered.

53. *Q. Can you tell me in one word what is that secret?*

A. Ignorance.

54. *Q. Can you tell me the remedy?*

A. To dispel Ignorance and become wise.

55. *Q. Why does Ignorance cause suffering?*

A. Because it makes us prize what is not worth prizing, grieve for that we should not grieve for, consider real what is not real but only illusionary, and pass our lives in the pursuit of worthless objects, neglecting what is in reality most valuable.

56. *Q. What is the light that can dispel this ignorance of ours and remove all our sorrows?*

A. The knowledge of the "Four Noble Truths," as Buddha called them.

57. *Q. Name these Four Noble Truths?*

A. 1. The miseries of existence; 2. The cause productive of misery, which is the desire, ever renewed, of satisfying one's self without being able ever to secure that end; 3. The destruction of that desire, or the estranging of one's self from it; 4. The means of obtaining this destruction of desire.

58. *Q. Tell me some things that cause sorrow?*

A. Birth; growth, decay, illness, death; separation from objects we love, hating what cannot be avoided, craving for what cannot be obtained.

59. *Q. These are individual peculiarities?*

A. Yes: and they differ with each individual; but all men have them in degree, and suffer from them.

60. *Q. How can we escape the sufferings which result from unsatisfied desires, and ignorant cravings?*

A. By complete conquest over, and destruction of this eager thirst for life and its pleasures, which cause sorrow.

61. *Q. How may we gain such a conquest ?*

A. By following in the Noble Eightfold Path which Buddha discovered and pointed out:

62. *Q. What do you mean by that word : what is this Noble Eightfold Path ?*

A. The eight parts of this path are called *angas*; they are: 1. Right Belief; 2. Right Thought; 3. Right Speech; 4. Right Doctrine; 5. Right Means of Livelihood; 6. Right Endeavour; 7. Right Memory; 8. Right Meditation. The man who keeps these *angas* in mind and follows them will be free from sorrow and may reach salvation.

63. *Q. Salvation from what ?*

A. Salvation from the miseries of existence and of rebirths, all of which are due to ignorance and impure lusts and cravings.

64. *Q. And when this salvation is attained, what do we reach ?*

A. Nirvána.

65. *Q. What is Nirvána ?*

A. A condition of total cessation of changes; of perfect rest; of the absence of desire and illusion, and sorrow; of the total obliteration of every thing that goes to make up the physical man. Before reaching Nirvána man is constantly being reborn: when he reaches Nirvána he is reborn no more.

66. *Q. What causes us to be reborn ?*

A. The unsatisfied desire for things that belong to the state of individual existence in the material world.

67. *Q. Are our rebirths in any way affected by the nature of our unsatisfied desires?*

A. Yes: and by our individual merits or demerits.

68. *Q. Does our merit or our demerit control the state, condition, or form in which we shall be reborn?*

A. It does. The broad rule is that if we have an excess of merit, we will be well and happily born the next time; if an excess of demerit, our next birth will be wretched and full of suffering.

69. *Q. Is this Buddhistical doctrine supported or denied by the teachings of modern science?*

A. True science entirely supports this doctrine of cause and effect. Science teaches that man is the result of a law of development, from an imperfect and lower, to a higher and perfect, condition.

70. *Q. What is this doctrine of science called?*

A. Evolution.

71. *Q. Can you show any further endorsement of Buddhism by science?*

A. Buddha's doctrine teaches that there were many progenitors of the human race; also that certain individuals have a greater capacity for the rapid attainment of Wisdom, and arrival at Nirvana, than others. Of Bódhisats there are three kinds—

72. *Q. Stop: what is a Bódhisat?*

A. A being who in some future birth is sure to appear upon earth as a Buddha.

73. *Q. Proceed. How are these three kinds of Bódhisats called ?*

A. Panyadika, or Ugghatitagnya—"he who attains quickly ;" Saddhadhika, or Wipachitagnya—"he who attains less quickly ;" and Wiriadhika, or Gneyya—"he who attains least quickly."

74. *Q. Well, proceed ?*

A. Just so modern science teaches that, out of the millions of beings that appear upon earth, some reach perfection most quickly, some less quickly, and others least quickly. Buddhists say that the nature of the rebirth is controlled by the Karma—the preponderance of merit or demerit—of the previous existence. The men of science say the new form is the result of the influences (Environment) that surrounded the previous generation. There is thus an agreement between Buddhism and science as to the root-idea.

75. *Q. And then, do not both Buddhism and science teach that all beings are alike subject to universal law ?*

A. Both do so teach.

76. *Q. Then may all men become Buddhas ?*

A. It is not in the nature of every man to become a Buddha ; for a Buddha is developed only at long intervals of time, and, seemingly, when the state of humanity absolutely requires such a teacher to show it the forgotten Path to Nirvána. But every being may equally reach Nirvána, by conquering Ignorance and gaining Wisdom.

77. *Q. Does Buddhism teach that man is reborn only upon our earth ?*

A. No: We are taught that the inhabited worlds are numberless ; the world upon which a

person is to have his next birth, as well as the nature of the rebirth itself, being decided by the preponderance of the individual's merit or demerit. In other words, it will be controlled by his attractions, as science would describe it.

78. Q. *Are there worlds more perfect and developed, and others less so, than our Earth?*

A. Buddhism teaches this, and also that the inhabitants of each world correspond in development with itself.

79. Q. *Has not the Buddha summed up his whole religion in one SUTTA, or verse?*

A. Yes.

80. Q. *Repeat it?*

*Sabbapāpassa akaranam
Kusalassa upasampadā
Sa chitta pariyo dapanam—
Etaṃ Buddhānu sāsanaṃ.**

“To cease from all sin,
To get virtue,
To cleanse one's own heart,—
This is the religion of the Buddhas.”

81. Q. *Do these precepts shew that Buddhism is an active, or a passive religion?*

A. To ‘cease from sin,’ may be called a passive, but to ‘get virtue,’ and to ‘cleanse one's

* This celebrated verse has a meaning that should not be overlooked by the student of Buddhist philosophy. The first line embodies the whole spirit of the *Vinaya*, the second line that of the *Sutta*, the third that of the *Abhidhamma*: thus in three lines, collectively comprising only eight Pāli words, are condensed the entire essence of the Buddhist scriptures. According to Mr. Rhys Davids there are about 1,752,800 words in the whole text of the three Pitakas.

own heart,' are altogether *active* qualities. Buddha taught that we should not merely *not* be evil, but that we should be *positively* good.

82. Q. *How would a Buddhist describe true merit?*

A. There is no great merit in any outward act; salvation depends upon the inward motive that provokes the deed.

83. Q. *Give an example?*

A. A rich man may expend lakhs of rupees in building Dágobas or Viháras, in erecting statues of Buddha, in festivals and processions, in feeding priests, in giving alms to the poor, or in digging tanks or constructing rest-houses by the roadside for travellers, and yet have comparatively little merit, if all this is done for the mere sake of display and to make himself praised by men, or for any other selfish motive. But he who, whether rich or poor, does the least of these things with kind motive, or from a warm love for his fellow-men, gains great merit. A good deed done with a bad motive benefits others, but not him who does it.

84. Q. *In what books is written all the most excellent Wisdom of Buddha's teachings?*

A. In the three collections of books called *Tripitikas*.

85. Q. *What are the names of the three Pitakas, or groups of books?*

A. The *Vinaya Pitaka*, the *Sutta Pitaka*, and the *Abbidhamma Pitaka*.

86. Q. *What do they respectively contain?*

A. The first contains rules of discipline, for the government of the priests; the second contains

instructive discourses for the laity; the third explains the metaphysics of Buddhism.

87. Q. *Do Buddhists believe these books to be inspired, in the sense that Christians believe their Bible to be?*

A. No: but they revere them as containing all the parts of that Most Excellent Law, by the knowing of which man may save himself.

88. Q. *Do Buddhists consider Buddha as one who by his own virtue can save us from the consequences of our individual sins?*

A. Not at all. No man can be saved by another; he must save himself.

89. Q. *What, then, was Buddha to us and all other beings?*

A. An all-seeing, all-wise counsellor; one who discovered the safe path and pointed it out; one who showed the cause of, and the only cure for human suffering. In pointing to the road, in showing us how to escape dangers, he became our Guide. And as one leading a blind man across a narrow bridge, over a swift and deep stream saves his life, so in showing us, who were blind from ignorance, the way to salvation, Buddha may well be called our 'Saviour.'

90. Q. *If you were to try to represent the whole spirit of Buddha's Doctrine by one word, which word would you chose?*

A. JUSTICE.

91. *Why?*

A. Because it teaches that every man gets under the operations of universal law, exactly that reward or punishment which he has deserved;

no more, and no less. No good deed or bad deed, however trifling, and however secretly committed, escapes the evenly-balanced scales of Karma.

92. *Were all these points of Doctrine that you have explained meditated upon by Buddha near the Bó-tree?*

A. Yes, these and many more that may be read in the Buddhist Scriptures. The entire system of Buddhism came to his mind during the Great Meditation.

93. *Q. How long did Buddha remain near the Bó-tree.*

A. Forty-nine days.

94. *Q. What did he then do?*

A. He went to the tree called Ajapála, where he decided after meditation to teach his law to all without distinction of sex, caste or race.

95. *To whom did he first preach his Doctrine?*

A. To the five companions, or disciples, who had abandoned him when he broke his severe fast.

96. *Q. Where did he find them?*

A. At Isipatana, near Benares.

97. *Did they readily listen to him?*

A. They meant not to do so. However, so great was the beauty of his appearance and the power of his influence, all five were forced to pay the closest attention to his preaching.

98. *Q. What is this discourse of Buddha's called?*

A. The Dhammacakka-ppavattana Sutta,—the Sutra of the Definition of the Rule of Doctrine.*

* The High Priest Sumangala gives me this translation of the title.

99. *Q. What effect had the discourse upon the five companions ?*

A. The aged Kondanya was first to enter the path leading to arahatship ; afterwards, the other four.

100. *Q. Who were the next converts ?*

A. A young, rich layman, named Yassa, and his father. By the end of five months the disciples numbered sixty persons.

101. *Q. What did Buddha at that time do ?*

A. Called together his disciples, and sent them in various and opposite directions to preach. He himself went to a town called Senani which was near Uruwela.

102. *Q. Are there many Buddhists at present in all the world ?*

A. There are more Buddhists than any other class of religionists.

103. *Q. How many people are there supposed to be living on this earth ?*

A. About 1,300 millions.

104. *Q. Of these how many are Buddhists ?*

A. About 500 millions ; not quite half.

105. *Q. You say that after Buddha had been preaching five months, his followers numbered only sixty in all ?*

A. He had that many disciples only.

106. *Q. After becoming Buddha how long did he teach his Doctrine on earth ?*

A. Forty-five years. During this time he made a vast number of converts among all classes ;

among rajahs and coolies, the rich and the poor, the mighty and the humble.

107. *Q. What became of his former wife and his son Rahula ?*

A. First Rahula, and, later, Yasódhara gave up the world and became followers of his Doctrine.

108. *Q. What of his father, the King ?*

A. He accepted the true Doctrine also.

109. *Q. Throughout his career was it Buddha's habit to travel about the country ?*

A. During eight months of the year he went from city to city, and from province to province, teaching and preaching to the people. During the four rainy months he would remain in one place, giving especial instruction to his declared followers.

110. *Q. Do Buddhist priests still imitate this custom ?*

A. Yes, many do.

111. *Q. Of all Buddha's own disciples, who were his favourites ?*

A. Sáriputra and Moggallána.

112. *Q. How do Buddhist priests differ from the priests of other religions ?*

A. In other religions the priests claim to be intercessors between men and God, to help obtain pardon of sins; the Buddhist priests do not acknowledge or expect anything from a Divine Power, but they ought to govern their lives according to the Doctrine of Buddha and teach the true path to others. A personal god Buddhists

regard as only a gigantic shadow thrown upon the void of space by the imagination of ignorant men.

113. *Q. Do they accept the theory of everything having been formed out of nothing by a Creator ?*

A. Buddha taught that two things are eternal, viz., 'Akása' and 'Nirvána:' everything has come out of Akása in obedience to a law inherent in it, and, after a certain existence, passes away. We do not believe in miracle; hence we deny creation, and cannot conceive of a Creator.

114. *Q. Did Buddha hold to idol worship ?*

A. He did not.

115. *Q. But do not Buddhists offer flowers and make reverence before the statue of Buddha, his relics, and the monuments enshrining them ?*

A. Yes, but not with the sentiment of the idolator.

116. *Q. What is the difference ?*

A. Our Pagan brother not only takes his images as visible representations of his unseen God or gods; but the refined idolator in worshipping considers that the idol contains in its substance a portion of the all-pervading divinity. The Buddhist reverences Buddha's statue and the other things you have mentioned only as mementos of the greatest, wisest, most benevolent, and compassionate man who ever lived. All races and peoples preserve, treasure up, and value the relics and mementos of men and women who have been considered in any way great. Buddha, to us, seems more to be revered

and beloved by every human being who knows sorrow, than any one else in the history of the world.

117. *Q. Does popular Buddhism contain nothing but what is true, and in accord with science ?*

A. Like every other religion that has existed many centuries, it doubtless contains untruth mingled with truth; even gold is found mixed with dross. The poetical imagination, zeal, or lingering superstitions of Buddhist devotees, in various ages, have no doubt caused the noble principles of Buddha's moral doctrines to be coupled more or less with what might be removed to advantage.

118. *Q. Is Buddhism opposed to education, and to the study of science ?*

A. Quite the contrary; in the *Sigālowāda Sutta*, a discourse preached by Buddha in the bambu grove near Rajagriha, he specified as one of the duties of a teacher that he should give his pupils "instruction in science and lore."

119. *Q. Does Buddhism countenance hypocrisy ?*

A. The *Dhamma-pada* says: "Like a beautiful flower full of colour, without scent, the fine words of him who does not act accordingly are fruitless."

120. *Q. Does Buddhism teach us to return evil for evil ?*

A. In the *Dhamma-pada* Buddha said: "a man who foolishly does me wrong, I will return to him the protection of my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him, the more good shall go from me." This is the path followed by

the Arahats.* To return evil for evil is positively forbidden in Buddhism.

121. Q. *Is Buddhism a chart of science, or a code of morals?*

A. It is chiefly a pure moral philosophy. It assumes the universal operation of the law of motion and change, by which all things, the worlds and all forms, animate and inanimate, upon them are governed. It is unprofitable to waste time in speculating as to the origin of things. In the *Málunka Sutta* we read that when Málunka asked Buddha to explain the origin of things he made him no reply; as he considered that the inquiry tended to no profit. Buddhism takes things as they are, and shows how the existing evil and misery may be overcome.

122. Q. *Does Buddhism teach the immortality of the soul?*

A. "Soul," it considers a word used by the ignorant to express a false idea. If every thing is subject to change, then man is included, and every material part of him must change. That which is subject to change is not permanent: so there can be no immortal survival of a changeful thing.

123. Q. *If the idea of a human "soul" is to be rejected, what is that in man which gives him the impression of having a permanent individuality?*

A. *Tanha*, or the unsatisfied desire for existence. The being having done that for which he

* A Buddhist ascetic who by a prescribed course of practice, has attained to a superior state of moral and intellectual development.

must be rewarded or punished in future, and having *Tanha*, will have a rebirth through the influence of *Karma*.

124. Q. *What is it that is born ?*

A. A new aggregation of *Skandhas*, or individuality, caused by the last yearnings of the dying person.

125. Q. *How many Skandhas are there ?*

A. Five.

126. Q. *Name the five Skandhas ?*

A. *Rúpa*, *Vedaná*, *Saññá*, *Sankhára* and *Viññána*.

127. Q. *Briefly explain what they are ?*

A. *Rúpa*, material qualities; *Vedaná*, sensation; *Saññá*, abstract ideas; *Sankhára*, tendencies of mind; *Viññána*, mental powers. Of these we are formed; by them we are conscious of existence; and through them communicate with the world about us.

128. Q. *To what cause must we attribute the differences in the combination of the Five Skandhas which make every individual differ from every other individual ?*

A. To the *Karma* of the individual in the next preceding birth.

129. Q. *What is the force or energy that is at work, under the guidance of Karma, to produce the new being ?*

A. *Tanha*—the “WILL TO LIVE.”*

* The student may profitably consult Schopenhauer in this connection.

130. *Q. Upon what is the doctrine of rebirths founded?*

A. Upon the perception that perfect justice, equilibrium, and adjustment are inherent in the universal law of nature. Buddhists do not believe one life long enough for the reward or punishment of a man's deeds. The great circle of re-births will be more or less quickly run through according to the preponderating purity or impurity of the several lives of the individual.

131. *Q. What is the ultimate point towards which tend all these series of changes in form?*

A. NIRVĀNA.

132. *Q. Does Buddhism admit that man has in his nature any latent powers for the production of phenomena, commonly called 'miracles'?*

A. Yes; but they are natural, not supernatural. They may be developed by a certain system which is laid down in our sacred books.

133. *What is this branch of science called?*

A. The Pāli name is *Iddhiwiddhiñāna*.

134. *Q. How many kinds are there?*

A. Two: "Laukika" (i. e., one in which the phenomena-working power is obtained by resort to drugs, the recitation of *mantras* (charms), or other extraneous aids), and "Lokothra" (that in which the power in question is acquired by interior self-development).

135. *Q. What class of men enjoy these powers?*

A. They gradually develop in one who pursues a certain course of ascetic practice called *Dhyana*.

136. *Q. Can this Iddhi power be lost ?*

A. The *Laukika* can be lost, but the *Lokothra* never, when once acquired.

137. *Q. Had Buddha this last-named Iddhi ?*

A. Yes, in perfection.

138. *Q. What did Buddha's wisdom embrace ?*

A. He knew the Possible and the Impossible ; the causes of Merit and Demerit ; he could read the thoughts of all beings ; he knew the laws of nature, the illusions of the senses and the means to suppress desires ; he could distinguish the births and rebirths of individuals ; and other things.

139. *Q. You spoke of a 'deva' having appeared to the Prince Siddartha under a variety of forms ; what do Buddhists believe respecting races of invisible beings having relations with mankind ?*

A. They believe that there are such beings ; which inhabit worlds, or spheres, of their own. It is Buddhist doctrine that by interior self-development and conquest over his baser nature, the *Arahat* becomes superior to the best of the *devas*, and may subject and control the lower orders.

140. *Q. How many kinds of devas are there ?*

A. Three: "*Kamawachera*" (those which are still under the dominion of the passions) ; "*Rupawachera*," (a higher class, but which still retain an individual form) ; "*Arupawachera*," (the highest in degree of purification, and which are devoid of material forms.)

141. Q. *Should we fear any of them ?*

A. He who is pure in heart and of a courageous mind need fear nothing : no bad deva can injure him. But some have power to torment the impure, as well as those who invite their approach.

142 Q. *Give me the particulars about the death of the body of Buddha, and his departure to Nirvána ?*

A. Having accomplished his self-appointed task, perfected his Doctrine, and pointed out the path to Nirvána to thousands of people, he was ready to depart. The 45th season after his attaining Buddhahood, at the full moon day of May, he came at evening to Kusi-nagara, a place about 120 miles from Benares, and his end approaching, he caused his couch to be spread between two Sál trees, the head towards the North. He preached in the first part of the night to the Malliya princes ; in the second part of the night he converted a great Brahmin pandit, Sabhadra ; after that he discoursed to the assembled priests about his Doctrine ; at daybreak he passed into the interior condition of " Samadhi."

143. Q. *What were Buddha's last words, and to whom addressed ?*

A. To his disciples : he said. " Mendicants ! I now impress it upon you, the parts and powers of man must be dissolved ; WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION with diligence." After this he spake no more.

144. Q. *Give the important dates connected with his life ?*

He was born under the constellation Wissa on a Friday in May, in the year 2478 of the Kali-

yuga; went into the jungle in the year 2506; became a Buddha in the year 2513 on a Wednesday, at early dawn; and in the year 2558, at the full moon of May, on a Tuesday, he expired at the age of eighty years.

145. *Q. Did he write in books his Doctrine ?*

A. No; it was not the Indian custom. During the forty-five years of his teaching he developed his Doctrine in all the minute details. He recited it to his disciples, who committed it to memory, word by word. But as there was no prohibition against writing it, it appears from the *Dhatu Wibhanga Sutta* that King Bimbisára caused the chief points to be inscribed on golden leaves. In the season of *was* following his death a council, consisting of 500 Aralats under the presidency of Mahá Kásyapa, one of Buddha's greatest disciples, was held to settle the rules and doctrines of the Order.

146. *Q. Where did this Council meet ?*

A. At the Sattapaññi cave, near Rájagriha. The whole council chanted together the words of the Teacher.

147. *Q. When were other Councils held ?*

A. A second, at Vaisáli, in the Walukaram temple, a century later, under the presidency of Yasesta Arahat; a third, at Patna, in the 226th year of the Buddhist Era, in the Asokarama temple, under the presidency of Moggali Tissa, and the patronage of the great King Aṣoka.

148. *Who was King Asoka ?*

A. King of Magadha, and the most powerful monarch of his time in Asia. He was converted

to Buddhism in the 10th year of his reign and most devoted to its spread throughout the world. He was a good King and his name is honoured and beloved wherever there are Buddhists.

149. *Q. What did he do for Buddhism ?*

A. Built dagobas and monasteries, established gardens and hospitals not only for men but also for animals, and enjoined all his subjects to observe the moral precepts of Buddha. He also sent missionaries after the Council of Patna to carry the religion to many different countries, and ambassadors to four Greek Kings to inform them about Buddha's Doctrine. To keep the religion pure he established in his own country the office of Minister of Justice and Religion. The King also appointed officials to promote the education of women in the principles of Buddha.

150. *Q. What tangible proof is there of all this ?*

A. Within the last fifty years there have been discovered in various parts of India and Afghanistan, the edicts of King Aśoka engraven on rocks and stone pillars. They have been translated into English and published at the Government Press in India.

151. *Q. In what light do these edicts make Buddhism appear ?*

A. As a religion of noble tolerance, of universal brotherhood, of righteousness and justice. They have done much to win for it the respect in which it is now held in Europe and America.

152. *Q. How does a recent English writer express himself about these edicts, in a work published*

by a *Christian Educational Society* ? (*Buddhism*, by T. W. Rhys-Davids, Esq.)

A. He says: "The edicts are full of a lofty righteousness..... Obedience to parents; kindness to children and friends; mercy towards the brute creation; indulgence to inferiors; reverence towards Brahmins and members of the Order; suppression of anger, passion, cruelty or extravagance; generosity, and tolerance, and charity—such are the lessons which 'the kindly King, the delight of the gods,' inculcates on all his subjects."

153. Q. *When was Buddhism introduced into Ceylon ?*

A. In the reign of King Devanam Piya Tissa, it was brought to Ceylon by Mahinda, King Aśoka's own son, who had become a priest. The King of Ceylon received him and the six priests accompanying him with great favour; became a convert to Buddhism, and built the Thúpárama Dágoba, at Anurádhapura. The sister of Mahinda—Saṅghamitta—who had also entered the Order, came to Ceylon, some time after, with a party of Buddhist nuns, and instructed many Sinhalese ladies in religion. Saṅghamitta brought over with her a branch of the Bó-tree at Buddha-Gaya, under which the Teacher had gained the Buddhahood. This was planted at Anurádhapura and is still living. It is acknowledged to be the oldest historical tree in the world.