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1915.

569TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 'B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, ON MONDAY, MAY 3RD, 1915, AT 4.30 P.M.

COL. M. A. ALVES TOOK THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the preceding Meeting were read and confirmed.

The CHAIRMAN invited the Rev. Dr. St. Clair Tisdall, who had favoured the Institute with important papers upon two former occasions, to deliver his address on "Mahâyâna Buddhism and Christianity."

MAHÂYÂNA BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

By the REV. W. ST. CLAIR TISDALL, D.D.

MAHÂYÂNA Buddhism has recently been asserted to resemble Christianity very closely. A writer who has spent many years in China, in close contact with those who profess the former faith, speaks of "the extensive common* ground in Buddhism and Christianity," tells us that there is a "vital connexion between Christianity and Buddhism," styles the Mahâyâna school "New Testament Buddhism," finds "a complete identification of the attributes of the Christian Trinity in the New Buddhism," and even ventures to assert that "its theology is Christian in everything almost but its nomenclature." He adds a statement with which, *if it be the truth*, we must reckon in all missionary work in the Far East, and which we now proceed to examine. "If it be, as it is more and more believed, that the Mahâyâna Faith is not Buddhism, properly so called, but an Asiatic form of the same Gospel of

* *The New Testament of Higher Buddhism*, by Timothy Richard, D.D., Litt.D., pp. 2, 9, 15, 27 and 39.

our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in Buddhistic nomenclature, differing from the Old Buddhism just as the New Testament differs from the Old, then it commands a world-wide interest, for in it we find an adaptation of Christianity to ancient thought in Asia, and the deepest bond of union between the different races of the East and the West, namely, the bond of a common religion." This writer proceeds to say,* "Buddhism and Christianity at first contact in modern days were mutually hostile to one another. But when the earnest students of both religions penetrated through the different forms and nomenclature into the deep internal meaning of all, they found not only that they aimed at the same thing, the salvation of the world, but that many of their chief teachings were common to both. They no longer feared each other as foes, but helped each other as friends."

If we take all this, or even a small part of it, as true, we must then proceed to enquire how such a stupendous fact is to be accounted for. This our author attempts to explain by advocating something very similar to the German writer Jeremias' theory of the supposed† Babylonian origin of religions. This theory is so completely contrary to well-known historical facts that we need not stay to examine it. Nor is it necessary to do so. Before enquiring how to account for the asserted close resemblance between these two religions, we must first examine Mahâyânism, in order to see for ourselves whether such a resemblance really exists or not. This we now proceed to do.

At the outset of our investigation we must very briefly enquire what history tells us about the origin of this particular form of Buddhism, at what time and under what circumstances it was introduced into China, and in what relation it stands to the teaching‡ of the earlier system still prevalent in Ceylon, Burma, and Siam.

Siddhârtha (also called Gautama, Śâkyamuni, and "the Buddha" *par excellence*) died about 477-478 B.C., at the age of eighty years. Under King Aśoka, who reigned from 257 to 220 B.C., the system of philosophy which he taught became the

* *Op. cit.*, pp. 48, 49.

† *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*, vol. i, cap. i. See my *Christianity and other Faiths*, pp. 220, 221.

‡ The religious books of Northern Indian Mahâyânism are the following nine: *Prajâpâramitâ*, *Gaṇḍavyûha*, *Daśa-bhûmiśvara*, *Samâdhi-râja*, *Lankâvatâra*, *Saddharma-puṇḍarîka*, *Tathâgata-guhyaka*, *Lalita-vistara*, *Suvarna-prabhâsa*.

established religion of almost the whole of India. It divided, in process of time, into a considerable number of sects, but the only ones which we need notice at present are those known as the Hīnāyāna, or "Little Vehicle," and the Mahāyāna, or "Great Vehicle," respectively. Of these the former represents more nearly the original teaching of Buddha; the latter, *based on the same great principles*, has gradually come to incorporate into itself doctrines borrowed from the religions and philosophies of the various countries into which it has spread. But the important modifications thus introduced have not to any great extent been permitted, at least in theory, to alter its main dogmas. In the Mahāyāna system we find certain words used in a sense different from that in which they occur in earlier books, and some terms are now employed in a technical significance which does not necessarily correspond with their etymological* meaning. But such things are characteristic of all philosophical systems. Popular Mahāyānism in China differs not a little from that prevalent in Tibet, which is generally known as Lamaism, and which, therefore, we do not deal with here. The Buddhism of Japan, being in large measure derived from Corea and China, resembles the Chinese form of the system much more closely. Both here and in China we find Hīnāyāna and Mahāyāna ideas intermingled, so that Chinese Buddhism is in reality most essentially and unmistakably *Buddhism*, in spite of the fact that it has admitted many modifications in its corrupt popular forms. Yet all of these admixtures, taken together, do not in any way render it at all worthy of being described as in any degree "a form of Christianity," as we now proceed to show.

One of the latest exponents of Mahāyāna Buddhism is Suzuki, himself a learned Japanese Buddhist, well acquainted with English, and able to expound his beliefs in our own tongue. In his *Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism* he is, no doubt (like many Muslims and Hindūs of Western education), inclined to try to identify the doctrines of his own faith with certain forms of modern philosophical and scientific speculation. For this we must make due allowance. But on the whole he gives a correct

* *E.g.*, *Dharmakāya* (from *dharma*, law, enactment, religion, and *kāya*, a body, means in early Indian Mahāyāna works (1) the "law-body," one of the three bodies of each Buddha; (2) or "having the law as a body (= a Buddha); (3) or it is one of Avalokiteśvara's names; (4) or it is the name of a god of the *Bodhi* tree (Monier Williams). In modern Mahāyānism its sense is different, as we shall see.

account of Mahâyâna teaching, as far as its main tenets are concerned, apart from the beliefs and practices which the popular forms of the religion have assimilated from Taoism and other Chinese beliefs. His version of Aśvaghosha's *Awakening of Faith* enables us to test his statements. Further indisputable information is afforded by Beal's and other translations of Buddhist works, translated from Sanskrit into Chinese many centuries ago. We refer to these rather than to the original Sanskrit works themselves, because our business is not now to trace the gradual development of early Buddhism in India into the extinct *Indian* form of Mahâyânism, but rather to learn what *Chinese* Mahâyânism really is, and whether there is any justification for the statement that it is almost identical with Christianity except in the terms which it employs.

Were this so, we should have good cause to rejoice; but for that very reason it is the more needful to be on our guard against making a mistake about the matter. We therefore in the first place turn to what Suzuki tells us as to the leading doctrines of Mahâyâna Buddhism.

According to him, the nearest approach in the religion to a belief in God is the theory of the existence of the Dharmakâya. "Buddhism does not use the word *God* . . . Buddhism outspokenly acknowledges the presence in the world of a reality which transcends the limits of phenomenality, but which is nevertheless immanent everywhere, and manifests itself in its full glory. God or the religious object of Buddhism is generally called Dharmakâya-Buddha and occasionally Vairoçana-Buddha or Vairoçana-Dharmakâya-Buddha; still another name for it is Amitâbha-Buddha or Amitâyur-Buddha, the two latter being mostly used by the followers of the Sukhâvatî sect of Japan and China. Again, very frequently we find Śâkyamuni, the Buddha and the Tathâgata, stripped of his historical personality and identified with the highest truth and reality . . . Dharmakâya means the organized totality of things, or the principle of cosmic unity, though not as a purely philosophical concept, but as an object of the religious consciousness."* He proceeds to quote the following passage from the *Avatamsaka Sûtra*,† which gives a comprehensive statement about the nature of the Dharmakâya in these words: ‡"The Dharmakâya, though manifesting itself in the triple world, is free from impurities and desires. It

* *Outlines of Mahâyâna Buddhism*, pp. 219, 220.

† Chinese version.

‡ *Outlines of Mahâyâna Buddhism*, pp. 223, 224.

unfolds itself here, there, and everywhere, responding to the call of *Karma*. It is not an individual reality, it is not a false existence, but is universal and pure. It comes from nowhere, it goes to nowhere; it does not assert itself, nor is it subject to annihilation. It is for ever serene and eternal. It is the One, devoid of all determinations. This Body of Dharma has no boundary, no quarters, but is embodied in all bodies. Its freedom or spontaneity is incomprehensible, its spiritual presence in things corporeal is incomprehensible. All forms of corporeality are involved therein, it is able to create all things. Assuming any concrete material body as required by the nature and condition of *Karma*, it illuminates all creations. Though it is the treasure of intelligence, it is void of particularity. There is no place in the universe where this Body does not prevail. The universe becomes, but this Body for ever remains. It is free from all opposites and contraries, yet it is working in all things to lead them to Nirvāna."

This extract and the general teaching of the Sūtra on this subject represent Mahāyāna Buddhism in an early and comparatively pure form, that is to say, before the Dharmakāya had been personified and in part identified with Siddhārtha Buddha. Suzuki's own explanations of the term show this identification in a great degree complete. Hence he speaks of "The Dharmakāya or the Body of the Tathāgata, or the Body of Intelligence,"* and says that it "is† not a mere philosophical abstraction, standing aloof from this world of birth and death, of joy and sorrow, calmly contemplating the folly of mankind: but—it is a spiritual existence which is 'absolutely one, is real and true, and forms the *raison d'être* of all beings—is free from desires and struggles, and stands outside the pale of our finite understanding.'" Elsewhere he says: "The‡ Dharmakāya, which literally means *body or system of being*, is, according to the Mahāyānists, the ultimate reality that underlies all particular phenomena; it is that which makes the existence of individuals possible; it is the *raison d'être* of the universe; it is the norm of being, which regulates the course of events and thoughts. . . . The Dharmakāya may be compared in one sense to the God of Christianity, and in another sense to the *Brahman* or *Paramātman* of Vedāntism. It is different, however, from the former in that it does not stand transcendently above the

* *Op. cit.*, p. 231 (from the *Avatamsaka-Sūtra*).

† p. 231.

‡ pp. 45, 46.

universe, which, according to the Christian view, was created by God, but which is, according to Mahâyânism, a manifestation of the Dharmakâya himself. It is also different from *Brahman* in that it is not absolutely impersonal, nor is it a mere being. The Dharmakâya, on the contrary, is capable of willing and reflecting: to use Buddhist phraseology, it is *Karunâ* (love)* and *Bodhi* (intelligence), and not the mere state of being. This pantheistic and at the same time entheistic Dharmakâya is working in every sentient being, for sentient beings are nothing but a self-manifestation of the Dharmakâya." In much the same way, in the translation of *The Awakening of Faith*, he writes: "Dharmakâya signifies that which constitutes the ultimate foundation of existence, one great whole in which all forms of individuation are obliterated—in a word, the Absolute. This objective absolute being . . . has been idealized by Mahâyânists, so that that which knows is now identical with that which is known, because they say that the essence of existence is nothing but intelligence pure, perfect, and free from all possible worries and evils." And Aśvaghosha (if he† be the author of *The Awakening of Faith*) says: "The Dharmakâya can manifest itself in various corporeal forms just because it is the real essence of them. Matter (*rûpa*) and mind (*çitta*) from the very beginning are not a duality. So we speak of the universe as a system of rationality (*prajñakâya*), seeing that the real nature of matter just constitutes the norm of mind. Again we speak of the universe as a system of materiality (*dharmakâya*), seeing that the true nature of mind just constitutes the norm of matter."‡

From all this, which recalls to our minds many of the vain theories and dogmas of a large number of philosophies both Eastern and Western, ancient and modern, we clearly gather that Mahâyânism in its genuine form recognizes no God in any sense worthy of the term. Its Dharmakâya is an abstraction, and denotes the reality or *substance* which is conceived as underlying all that exists. It is impersonal, though there seems (from what we observe in Nature) to be somehow incorporated in it a blind pity (for *Karunâ* means *pity*, and not *love*), and through it there runs not a purpose, but some vague manifestation of intelligence. Most Mahâyânists deny to it Will, though

* The word does not mean *love*, but *pity*.

† Most scholars believe that he is not the Aśvaghosha of the first century of our era.

‡ *Awakening of Faith*, Suzuki's version, p. 103.

Suzuki thinks that quality too may be found in it somehow. Prayer cannot profitably be addressed to it, for it is devoid of personality and consciousness. It manifests itself in all that exists, for existent things are its outward garb, so to speak. But it is untouched by our troubles, and renders no help to men in attaining knowledge of itself, in overcoming temptation, in securing happiness hereafter. Great men, such as the historical Siddhārtha Buddha, are manifestations, or incarnations, of it; but so are all other men and all animals, plants, minerals, in fact all things that exist. We may in a sense style this Pantheism, or we may call it Atheism, or Monism, or we may apply to the Mahāyāna system a variety of other names, all more or less appropriate; but the one thing that we *cannot* do, if in any degree we understand the system, is to assert that it is in any sense a form of Christianity.

Mahāyānism is genuinely Buddhistic in this, that it utterly denies the existence of Personality, not only in the Dharmakāya, but also in man. "What* distinguishes Buddhism most characteristically and emphatically from all other religions is the doctrine of non-Ātman, or non-ego, exactly opposite to the postulate of a soul-substance which is cherished by most of religious enthusiasts. In this sense Buddhism is undoubtedly a religion without the soul." "Buddhists do not deny the existence of the so-called empirical ego in contradistinction to the noumenal ego, which latter can be considered to correspond to the Buddhist ātman. Vasubandhu, in his treatise on Yogācāra's idealistic philosophy, declares that the existence of *ātman* and *dharma* is only hypothetical, provisional, apparent, and not in any sense real and ultimate. To express this in modern terms: the soul and the world, or subject and object, have only relative existence, and no absolute reality can be ascribed to them. Psychologically speaking, every one of us has an ego or soul which means the unity of consciousness. . . . Buddhism most emphatically insists on . . . the non-existence of a concrete, individual, irreducible soul-substance, whose immortality is so much coveted by most unenlightened people. Individuation is only relative and not absolute. . . . To think that there is a mysterious something behind the empirical ego, and that this something comes out triumphantly after the fashion of the immortal phoenix from the funeral pyre of corporeality, is not† Buddhistic." Here again Mahāyānism is absolutely opposed to Christianity.

* *Outlines*, p. 32.

† *Outlines*, pp. 163, 164.

It is a very remarkable thing that Buddha, who taught a philosophy in which there was no room for a God, should ultimately after his death himself have been deified. The reason, doubtless, is that man needs a deity of some kind, and that this need asserted itself, not only in the case of the great mass of his followers, as their numbers grew, and as Aśoka "caused those who had been deemed gods in India to be held to be no gods," but also in that of the more philosophically inclined among them. Hence it gradually came to be held that "The Buddha* never entered into Parinirvâṇa; the good dharma will never perish. He showed† an earthly death merely for the benefits of sentient beings." This dogma is not found in the books of the Hīnâyâna school. It shows the first step in the deification of the Tathâgata. The word originally meant "He who came as (others before him),"‡ and even in Chinese translations of Sanskrit works is used as a title of many, if not all, the other Buddhas as well as Siddhârtha. But in many Mahâyânist books it is employed as equivalent to Dharmakâya, the nearest approach in that system to the idea of Deity. Hence the idealized Buddha came to be regarded as a personal aspect or manifestation of the philosophical concept known as Dharmakâya. In this way he was supposed to have a "Triple body," the three being called respectively the body of Transformation (Nirmâṇa-kâya), the body of Bliss (Sambhoga-kâya), and the body of Dharma (Dharmakâya). In the first of these he has the power of assuming whatever bodily forms he pleases, the second is a corporeal existence in which he at the same time fills the universe and enjoys great happiness, in the third he is simply identical with the Dharmakâya. It is in the second form that the members of the Sukhâvatī sect, to which most Chinese Buddhists belong, now conceive of Buddha as reigning in "The pure Land" in the Western Paradise, a region of bliss, where the pious hope to find Amitâbha (or Amida) Buddha, surrounded by a vast number of other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and to enjoy an existence of unalloyed, if somewhat material, bliss. It is strange that some writers have ventured

* *Op. cit.*, p. 254.

† *Cf.*, the doctrine of the Docetic heresy in early Christian days.

‡ See below for fuller consideration of its import. The explanation given in the *Vajracchedikâ* does not make the matter very clear. The name Tathâgata is there said to "express true Suchness, the absence of origin, the destruction of all qualities," and to be suitable because "no origin is the highest goal" (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xvii).

to compare this *Trikāya* doctrine with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

Others, however, prefer to compare the three main objects of Buddhist worship in China with the three "Persons" in one God in whom we Christians believe. Thus Dr. Timothy Richard speaks of "The Amitābha Trinity" as consisting of

"Amitābha in the centre,
Ta Shih Chih on his right hand,
Kwanyin or his left,"

and he compiles from "The Amitābha Scripture" the following account of the Chinese Ta Shih Chih, called Dai Seishi in Japanese, though no doubt using Christian terms much too freely, as is this writer's wont.

"God has two supreme heavenly beings as counsellors. The name of one is Kwanyin, and the name of the other is Ta Shih Chih (the Great Mighty One), who always sit on each side of Him. God took counsel with them about past, present and future affairs of the universe, and desired that they should separate from Him and go and become incarnate in one of the worlds and help Him to save it, without losing their original unity and state. . . . The *Scripture of Boundless Age* says of Ta Shih Chih that he can put an end to the *Karma*-chain of endless births and deaths caused by sin by removing sin altogether, without needing a single re-birth, but go straight to the Pure Land of Paradise, and live for ever there (Meditation 12)." Of the other member of this Triad, the goddess Kwanyin, Dr. Richard writes: "This Inspirer of their highest and holiest thoughts they call Kwanyin in China and Kwannon in Japan, which means the one who looks down upon human suffering and is the inspirer of men and women to save their fellows. Sometimes this Inspirer is represented by a male, Mañjuśri, and sometimes by a female, the goddess of Mercy."*

Here again our author allows his imagination to guide him into statements which are likely to lead his readers very much astray, though he incidentally shows that Mahāyānism in China has assimilated a great deal of Chinese polytheism and idolatry. Ta Shih Chih and Kwanyin are genuine Chinese Deities, though the latter has been identified with the Northern Buddhist Avalokiteśvara. Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśri were Bodhisattvas worshipped by the Mahāyānists in India as early as the time of the Chinese Pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang, in the seventh century

* *New Testament of Higher Buddhism*, pp. 13-15.

of our era. The former has been identified with the Hindû god Śiva, and also with the Sun. His name is by the Tibetans translated "the Lord who looks," but it may more grammatically denote "the Lord who is seen, the visible Lord." Another rendering is "Lord of compassionate glances." It is of this rather loose rendering that Dr. Richard gives a very unduly expanded paraphrase in the passage we have just quoted. A modern Nipālese inscription speaks of him as equivalent to Śakti, that is to say to the Hindû personification of the feminine procreative energy, a fact which shows that "The Chinese transformation of Avalokita into a woman had probably been already effected in India."* To identify a deity of this kind with the Holy Spirit hardly seems either accurate or reverent. Avalokiteśvara is apparently intended to represent the Buddha of the present, while Maitreya is that of the future, and hence Amitâbha that of the past. Thus this and other *mirages* of a Tri-une God in Buddhist Sculptures vanish on nearer approach. In the "Lotus of the True Law," Avalokiteśvara is superior to all other Bodhisattvas except Mañjuśri, who appears to hold a rank equal to his. "His real dwelling-place is in the Sukhâkara,† the Paradise of Amitâbha, where he sits sometimes on the right and sometimes on the left‡ of Buddha." In this it is evident that a great deal of the Mahâyâna form of Buddhism in China is really imported from India, though its deities have often been assimilated with native gods and goddesses.

Amitâbha "was§ in ancient times a Bhikshu called Dharmâkara. . . . Dharmâkara . . . vowed that, when he reached Buddhahood, he would have a 'Buddha-field' wondrously blessed, the Happy Land (*Sukhâvatî*); and that is why there flock to him from all the 'Buddha-fields' the beings appointed to *Nirvâna*, either as future *Arhats* or as Buddhas. It is with Amitâbha that those who are guilty, but possess the promise and potency of deliverance, spent their period of probation in lotus-flowers; with him also the Bodhisattvas become prepared for their last birth, by having good opportunities of going to visit, to honour, and to listen to the Buddhas of all the worlds. . . . The Bodhisattvas are not equal among themselves. In the heaven of Amitâbha there are two, Avalokita and Mahâsthâmaprâpta, almost as great and luminous as Buddha, who sit on thrones

* L. de la Vallée Poussin in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. i, p. 260.

† Otherwise called *Sukhâvatî*.

‡ Poussin, *ut supra*.

§ *Ibid*.

equal to his. Avalokita is the more majestic ; this is due to his vow to bring all beings, without exception, into the 'Happy Land' . . . He never forgets for a moment his rôle as provider of the Sukhāvati. And it is he, rather than Amitâbha himself, who is the lord of the Sukhāvati."

Mention of Sukhāvati, often styled the "Western Paradise," is to be found in the last pages of *The Awakening of Faith*, where, however, a reference is made to an unnamed Sûtra, possibly the larger or the smaller *Sukhāvati-vyûha* or the *Amitâyur-dhyâna*. *The Awakening of Faith* teaches also that the way of access to that Paradise is an easy one. "It is said in the Sûtra* that if devoted men and women would be filled with concentration of thought, think of Amitâbha Buddha in the world of highest happiness (*Sukhāvati*) in the Western region, and direct all the root of their good work toward being born there, they would assuredly be born there." The *Saddharma Puṇḍarîka* (a Sanskrit work which Kern says existed in or about A.D. 250, but contains teaching that goes back for perhaps a couple of centuries) is the chief authority for the descriptions of Sukhāvati now consulted in Japan as well as in China. It contains long accounts of its somewhat sensual happiness. In China it is taught that there Amitâbha welcomes those who on earth invoke his name, and that by so doing they may escape all the numerous Buddhist hells and obtain eternal happiness. The Chinese goddess Kwanyin, who is associated with him, is one of the most popular deities in modern China among Buddhists. Chinese legend connects her with a heroine who once lived in the sacred island P'u-t'o, near the mouth of the Yang-tse-Kiang. She is worshipped as the "Star of the Sea."

It should be observed that, though early Buddhism denounced all idol-worship, yet Mahâyâna Buddhism, which has admitted all kinds of gods from the Chinese and other religions, especially Hindûism, has adopted idolatry to the very fullest extent.

Some are inclined to think that Nestorian Christianity in Northern China produced considerable effect upon Mahâyânism, and in particular that some of the features of Amitâbha owe their origin to this source. If so, as Archdeacon A. E. Moule says,† these Christian elements, with the exception of belief in the efficacy of invoking Amitâbha, have almost altogether faded away. There is no need to derive the "Western Paradise" from

* *Awakening of Faith*, Suzuki's version, pp. 145, 146.

† *The Chinese People*, p. 184.

Christianity, for we have seen its Indian origin, at least in part. Paradise was situated in the West in early Egyptian, Greek, Keltic, and many other myths, and may well have been so in Chinese also. As to the general question whether Mahâyânism has borrowed anything from any form of Christianity, it would be difficult, in this as in every other case, to prove a universal negative. Opinions will always differ on certain features of the religion, and, remembering how ready Mahâyânism showed itself to accept a whole host of religious ideas from the religions of China and Japan, there seems no reason whatever *a priori* to doubt that it would adopt the same attitude towards Nestorianism. But with regard to the *kinship* which some have sought to establish (in defiance of all history) between the two faiths, I am inclined to think that a much more reasonable view is that expressed by Professor De Groot, who tells us that Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism "are* three branches, growing from a common stem, which has existed from prehistoric times. This stem is the Religion of the Universe, its parts and phenomena. This Universism . . . is the *one* religion of China. As these three religions are its three integrant parts, every Chinese can feel himself equally at home in each, without being offended or shocked by conflicting and mutually exclusive dogmatic principles. In the age of Han, two centuries before and two after the birth of Christ, the ancient stem divided itself into two branches, Taoism and Confucianism, while simultaneously Buddhism was grafted upon it.

"Indeed Buddhism at that time found its way into China in a Universistic form, called Mahâyâna, and would therefore live and thrive upon the ancient stem. In this way the three religions appear before us as three branches of one trunk; as three religions, yet one." Buddhism "found its way into the Empire of China during the reign of the House of Han, and perhaps even before that time. It was more particularly the Mahâyâna form of Buddhism that entered China, *i.e.*, 'the great or broad way' to salvation, which claimed to lead all beings whatever, even animals and devils, through several stages of perfection unto the very highest stage of holiness, that of the Buddhas or gods of Universal Light, equivalent to absorption in universal Nothingness (*Nirvâna*). This 'Broad Way' could be trodden by following a religious discipline, consisting principally of asceticism and self-mortification. Accordingly it bore a striking resemblance to the *Tao of Man*, which . . . by

* *Religion in China.*

annihilating the passions, led to *wu wei*, or to that nothingness of action which the Universe itself displays. The two systems perfectly coalesced, they met harmoniously. Buddhism might consider its road into China to have been paved by Taoism. It adopted the word *Tao*, which means 'Way,' to denote its own Way to salvation; and on the other hand, Taoism held that Buddhism was preached in India by Lao-tsze himself, who journeyed for this purpose to the West, and never returned. The fusion was greatly furthered by the universalistic and syncretic spirit of the Mahāyāna, which, while imperatively insisting on effort for the salvation of *all* beings, and the increase of means leading to that great end, allotted, with almost perfect tolerance, a place in its system to the Tao of the Taoists."

We see, therefore, that Mahāyānism, instead of being in any way identical with any form of Christianity, has a very close relationship with Chinese Taoism. Neither system has any real place for a personal God. Both are purely human in origin, and both endeavour to show that men can, by their own unaided efforts, find a way of escape, not from sin, but from any real or imagined existence apart from the chain of causation. Between the Mahāyāna and the Christian meaning of Salvation there is as great a difference as between the Dharmakāya and the God in whom we believe and whom we know through Christ.

Mahāyānism accepts, at least in theory, the distinguishing Buddhist doctrine of *Karma**, about which therefore it is not necessary to say much in this paper†, the subject having often been dealt with by able writers. Metempsychosis or Transmigration of souls, though it is doubtless inconsistent with the teaching that man has no true Ego or soul, is believed in by Mahāyānists generally as fully as by members of the Hināyāna school. In fact this doctrine, originally belonging to Hindūism, has immense influence in China and Japan to-day, as well as in Ceylon. The form which the doctrine has now assumed in popular belief in China is that the lower animals have true but elementary souls, and that these may, if favourably situated for so doing, rise higher in the scale and be born into the world as men. In accordance with this idea, in not a few Buddhist monasteries in China the monks undertake to give certain

* With this and other leading tenets of original Buddhism I have dealt at length in *The Noble Eightfold Path*, Elliott Stock (C.M.S. House).

† I may be permitted to refer to my *The Noble Eightfold Path*, pp. 75, 87, etc.

selected animals a careful training that will enable them to be born as human beings* in the next life. It is remarkable, however, if we may credit those who speak from many years' personal acquaintance with Chinese Buddhism, that such tender care for the religious interests of the lower animals does not prevent these monks from showing callousness and indifference towards the sufferings of their own countrymen. It is much the same with Mahâyânism in Japan. A writer who has spent many years in the country says "Because of his faith in the doctrine of the Transmigration of souls, the toiling labourer will keep his wheels or his feet from harming the cat or dog or chicken in the road, even though it be at risk and trouble and with added labour to himself. The pious will buy the live birds or eels from the old woman who sits on the bridge, in order to give them life and liberty again in air or water Yet, while all this care is lavished on animals, the human being suffers. Buddhism is kind to the brute and cruel to man†." In Ceylon, too, where the Hinâyâna school of Buddhism is dominant, the belief in Metempsychosis has notoriously had the effect of rendering human life hardly more sacred in the people's eyes than the life of an animal. Hence the number of murders which occur there is greater in proportion to the population than in any other place known to us.

Much importance has recently been attached to what Mahâyânism teaches about Buddha under the title of *Tathâgata*, or in Chinese *Ju Lai*. The term has had the wildest and most fanciful meanings attached to it recently by the author of that astounding work of an ill-balanced judgment and untrammelled imagination, *The New Testament of Higher Buddhism*. This writer in different parts of his book renders the term, now by *Messiah*, *The Model Come*, *The True Model become Incarnate*, now by *Manifested Model*, *Incarnate Model*, and again by the titles "God Incarnate," "Incarnate Lord." It is difficult to find language severe enough to condemn such a pretended translation of the term. It means nothing even remotely similar to what these words express to a Christian. The Chinese *Ju Lai* is merely a translation of the original Sanskrit word *Tathâgata*. Now *Tathâgata* means literally "He who has come thus"‡

* See a prayer for this in De Groot's *Le Code du Mahâyâne en Chine*, p. 125; see also *op. cit.*, p. 53.

† Dr. Griffis, *The Religions of Japan*, pp. 315, 316.

‡ Cf., the similarly formed word *Yathâgata* in *Lalita-vistara*, p. 162, where it means "(the girls) just as they came."

(‘Ο οὐτως προσεληλυθώς), *i.e.*, who has come just as did the Buddhas that preceded him. Hence the same term is applied, not only in Sanskrit but also in Chinese Buddhist works to the Buddhas* in general. This fact is of itself sufficient to show that, even if the term *had* any deep meaning, it would denote something not peculiar to Siddhārtha Buddha but common to all the other real or imaginary Buddhas also. Hence to avoid its true meaning and deliberately to introduce in its stead technical terms of Christian theology, in order to lend support to the theory that Mahāyāna Buddhism is only Christianity under another name, is, to say the least of it, misleading. It is true also that, as Buddhism proper admits the existence of no God, the idealised and deified Buddha has, in part, usurped the place of the Deity (we say only in part, because popular Mahāyāna Buddhism is polytheistic, not monotheistic); yet this does not justify our author in boldly translating the word “Buddha” by “God” in his so-called “Translation” of *The Awakening of Faith*. The same exception must be taken to his rendering “Dharmakāya” by “The Divine Spirit,” since we have already seen that the Dharmakāya is impersonal. In fact it is not too much to say that each and every one of Dr. Richard’s statements about the close resemblance between Mahāyāna Buddhism and Christianity rests upon imagination and a singular unscrupulousness of statement, which renders him entirely unreliable as an authority.

We must now endeavour to explain as briefly as possible a few of the more important technical terms used by the Mahāyānists in stating some of the philosophical dogmas of their faith. One of these is *Bhūtatāthātā*, which Suzuki translates “Suchness,” and which he states to be one of the conceptions most distinctive of the Mahāyāna school. “Suchness” is also known as *Tathāgata-garbha* (*The Womb of the Tathāgata*) and *Ālaya-vijñāna* (*World consciousness*). The word literally means “the true nature of reality,” and in *The Awakening of Faith* it is thus explained: “Thus we understood that *Suchness* is neither that which is existence nor that which is non-existence, nor that which is at once existence and non-existence, nor that which is not at once existence and non-existence; that it is neither that which is unity nor that which is plurality, nor that which is at once unity and plurality, nor that which is not at once unity and plurality. In a word, as *Suchness* cannot be com-

* See Beal’s *Romantic History*, pp. 7 and 8, where Buddha gives the title to all the Buddhas who had preceded himself. See also p. 378, etc.

† *Awakening of Faith*, Suzuki’s version, pp. 59, 60.

prehended by the particularizing consciousness of all beings, we call it the Negation (or Nothingness, *Śūnyatā*.)” But, as this definition cannot be said to be exactly perspicuous, it may be well to add Suzuki’s explanation. “Suchness,”* he says, “the ultimate principle of existence, is known by so many different names, as it is viewed in so many different phases of its manifestation. Suchness is the Essence of Buddhas, as it constitutes the reason of Buddhahood; it is the Dharma when it is considered the norm of existence; it is the Bodhi when it is the source of intelligence; Nirvāna when it brings eternal peace to a heart troubled with egoism and its vile passions; Prajñā (wisdom) when it intelligently directs the course of nature; the Dharmakāya when it is religiously considered as the fountain-head of love and wisdom; the Bodhiçitta (intelligence-heart) when it is the awakener of religious consciousness; Śūnyatā (vacuity) when viewed as transcending all particular forms; the *summum bonum* (*kuṣalam*) when its ethical phase is emphasized; the Highest Truth (*paramārtha*) when its epistemological feature is put forward; the Middle Path (*madhyamārga*) when it is considered above the oneness and limitation of individual existence; the Essence of Being (*bhūtakoti*) when its ontological aspect is taken into account; the *Tathāgata-garbha* (the womb of Tathāgata) when it is thought of in analogy to mother earth, where all the germs of life are stored, and where all precious stones and metals are concealed under the cover of filth.” All this may perhaps be summed up by rendering the word “Actuality” or “Nature.”

In order to show the practical agreement between this doctrine of Suchness and the great fundamental principle of Taoism it is not necessary to do more than to quote an authoritative Chinese definition of what *Tao* itself is. In the *Tao-teh-king* (cap. xxv.) we read:†

“There was a something, undifferentiated and yet perfect, before heaven and earth came into being. So still, so incorporeal! It alone abides and changes not. It pervades all, but is not endangered. It may be regarded as the mother of all things. I know not its name; if I must designate it, I call it *Tao*. Striving to give it a name, I call it great; great, I call it transcending; transcending, I call it far off; far off, I call it returning . . . Man takes his norm from earth; earth from heaven; heaven from Tao; the Tao from itself.”

* *Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism*, pp. 125, 126.

† Quoted by Moore, *History of Religions*, vol. i, p. 50.

Or again :* “What is Tao ?” exclaims Huai-nan Tzū (or Liu An, 122 B.C.) in his *History of Great Light* . . . “Tao is that which supports Heaven and Earth. Hidden and obscure, it reinforces all things out of formlessness. Penetrating and permeating everything, it never acts in vain. It fills all within the Four Points of the Compass. It contains the Yin and the Yang.” As has been well said : “Now, † man’s great object, the goal of his hope for the future, the secret of life worth living now, must be conformity to this Tao, this Nature, or Principle of Nature, this pathway of souls, and of all things, this Doctrine of the Way. How is conformity to be secured ? ‘By being always and completely passive’ ; ‘Non-exertion’ ; ‘Not doing’ ; ‘Inertia,’ with all its ‘vices.’ Spontaneity and the absence of design also must be attained. Passionless, as well as quiescent, man must banish all desires from his heart, and simply yield himself to his environment. ‘He need not be a recluse to be quiescent. Holy men there were, who did not abide in forests. They did not conceal themselves, but they did not obtrude their virtues.’ (Chuang-tzū.)” This philosophy of quiescence is so thoroughly in accordance with certain forms of Hindū philosophy that, had not Taoism existed in China long before any known contact with the West, we should have been almost convinced of its Indian origin. In the same way the Doctrine of the Tao coincides almost entirely with the Mahāyānist theory of “Suchness,” which, indeed, though alien to earlier Buddhism, is distinctly derived from Hindū philosophy. These things not only show how closely Taoism and Mahāyānism are related to one another, but also how it was that, when introduced into China, Mahāyāna Buddhism found a wide acceptance and was able to assimilate many Chinese beliefs and to admit Kwanyin and perhaps other Chinese deities into its Pantheon. A similar process on a larger scale took place in Japan. In early days the indigenous gods of China were worshipped without the use of either temples or images ; and it is believed that both of these were introduced into the country by the Buddhists.

Worship in a Buddhist temple in China is thus described : ‡ “Buddha—the historic Gautama—sits in the centre of his own temple, gilded over the whole surface of his image, and with a

* Moule, *The Chinese People*, pp. 256, 257.

† *Ibid.*, Archdeacon Moule is here speaking from the Taoist point of view.

‡ *Op. cit.*, p. 213.

lotus-flower as his throne. On his right is usually Ânanda, . . . and on his left Kaśyapa . . . Very frequently one of the Buddhist Triads is represented, such as the Buddha of the Past, of the Present, and of the Future; or, again, Amitâbha often forms the centre of a group of other *avatârs*.* Before this central shrine in the larger temples and monasteries, matins at 3.30 a.m. and evensong at 5 p.m. are sung antiphonally by a choir of priests, and here the chief prostrations and offerings are made, and fortunes are ascertained by drawing lots before the idol. Here through the mingled influences of the awe inspired by these gigantic, silent images of the Buddha, and of bribes of sweets and other gifts mysteriously placed by parents and grandparents in the little hands as from the god, idolatry is stamped, sometimes indelibly, on the minds of China's children. There is an ambulatory behind this central shrine, and here the image of Kwan-yin, the goddess of Mercy, is placed, and largely resorted to by the worshippers."

It is held by some students that wandering Buddhist monks from Northern India came into contact with China as early as the second† century before our era. Be this as it may, there seems to be truth in the tale that, in A.D. 61, the Emperor Ming-ti, having in a dream beheld a golden image hovering over his palace, sent envoys to the West in order to find out whether the dream meant that a great Teacher had appeared there, whose teachings it behoved him to know. Instead of going on until they met with a Christian Apostle or Evangelist, these envoys halted on reaching a Buddhist monastery in North India, where they accepted the Mahâyânistic doctrines, and, returning to China after six years' absence, brought with them some Buddhist monks, who began to teach their doctrines at court, and to translate some of their Sacred Books into Chinese. Under Royal patronage the new tenets spread rapidly,—the more so because they not only harmonised with Taoism, but also because the teaching they gave about a Western Paradise which all might easily enter after death formed a great attraction.

It is not known precisely what Buddhist Sûtras were the first translated into Chinese, but, speaking generally, as far as is at present known, no Buddhist work was published in China until a considerable time after the beginning of our era. In fact,

* This use of the word is not quite correct.
 † Cf. Moore, *History of Religions*, p. 79.

when we remember that even the Sacred Books of the Southern or Pāli Canon were not (apparently) committed to writing until about eighty years B.C.,* and that a long period must be allowed to account for the development of the legends, theories, and accretions which distinguish the Mahāyāna or Sanskrit Canon from the teaching found in the Southern, it is evident that the Northern books must be much later in date. One of the Sanskrit works of the Northern Canon, the *Lalitavistara*, has been the subject of much discussion as to the date of its composition. Sir M. Monier-Williams thinks that the book† is “Probably as old as the second century of our era.”‡ This work was, it is said, early translated into Chinese. But it is admitted that this “first” version, if ever made, is no longer extant: and an examination of Beal’s *Romantic History* (which in p. 387 claims to be a version of the *Lalitavistara*, though it is elsewhere said to be a translation of the Mahāvastu, of the Foundation of the Vināya Piṭaka, and of the Abhinishkramaṇa-Sūtra) suffices to show how extremely unreliable such Chinese statements are. Beal himself states that the same name was in Chinese given to different works, and as an example of expansion gives, from Dharmaraksha’s (?)§ version of the Mahāparinibbāna-Sutta, an expanded account of Chanda’s conversation with Buddha near Kusināra (Beal’s translation of the “Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king,” pp. 365, *sqq.*). We know the date of the Chinese versions of some books: for instance, the Chinese translation of *The Awakening of Faith* was finished on September 10th, A.D. 554. || A great deal of Buddhist literature was translated early in the fifth century. ¶

The Awakening of Faith is used as a text-book for the teaching of Buddhist priests in China. It is doubtless a translation from a Sanskrit original, called the *Śraddhotpāda-śāstra*, the original of which has not yet been found. The work may have been correctly rendered into Chinese, without addition or omission, but, if so, it differs very considerably in

* Max Müller, *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, p. 5.

† *Buddhism*, pp. 69, 70.

‡ See the age of the *Lalitavistara* discussed in Professor Rhys Davids’ *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 198-204.

§ Or Dharmākshara.

|| Suzuki’s version, p. 39.

¶ Comparison of the Chinese “versions” with the original Sanskrit (where the latter still exists, as in the Buddha-carita) shows how inaccurate these versions are, and how freely they have admitted additions from other sources. They are thus rendered wholly useless for scientific purposes, unless confirmed by the Sanskrit text in each case.

this respect from the great mass of other Chinese translations. The author's name is said to have been Aśvaghoṣa, a name of not uncommon occurrence; but authorities differ much in stating the date at which he lived. * Some think he wrote about 300, others 370, others 500, others 600 years after Siddhârtha's death. The latter date would place him in the first century of our era, and would probably lead to his identification with the author of the *Buddha-carita*. But many scholars are very doubtful indeed about this identification. In fact not a few Chinese accounts mention the author of *The Awakening of Faith* by quite different names. It is perhaps impossible at the present time to decide either his name or his date; but this is not of great importance in our comparison between Christianity and Mahâyânism, because it is not too much to say that there is not the remotest resemblance to be found in *The Awakening of Faith* to one single doctrine of the New Testament. Yet this is the book which a modern European writer ventures to entitle *The New Testament of the Higher Buddhism!*

To his credit be it spoken, Dr. Timothy Richard does not attempt, as not a few German and English writers have done, to bolster up his assertions regarding the supposed resemblance between Mahâyâna Buddhism and Christianity by referring to the absurd legends contained in the *Lalita-vistara* and other books of uncertain and late date accepted by the Northern school of Buddhists. It is, of course, evident that, as these books were all composed as least some considerable time after the Gospel had reached Northern India, their legends would in any case have no weight in the matter. The arguments adduced from them against Christianity have been fully met by Dr. Kellogg† and others. But there is one matter to which it is perhaps well to refer very briefly before concluding this paper, because it is frequently brought forward even now. I mean the assertion that the Virginity of Buddha's mother, Mâyâ, is taught in certain Mahâyâna books. This is quite contrary to fact. The doctrine is taught in neither the Northern nor the Southern Canon, nor is it accepted by Buddhists anywhere. On the contrary, in many places it is clearly asserted that *his father was Śuddhódana* and his mother Mâyâ. In others there is the

* See Suzuki's "Introduction" to his translation of the book.

† *The Light of Asia and the Light of the World*. He completely answers Prof. Seydel's *Das Evangelium von Jesu in seinen Verhältnissen zu Buddha-Sage und Buddha-Lehre*.

statement that his birth was supernatural, but no hint is given of *Virgin-birth*. For example, in the *Sūtra of Brahma's Net*,* of which the influence in China and Japan is very great, (though its Sanskrit original is not yet found) there is the following statement :†

“At that time, Buddha Śākyamuni, after having previously shown himself in the East of the world enclosed in the lotus foreground, entered into the palace of the King of Heaven, and having there preached on the ‘Sūtra of the Māras who permit themselves to be converted,’ was born in Southern Jambudvīpa (India), in the kingdom of Kapilavastu. His mother was named Māyā, his father was surnamed the White and Pure (Śuddhōdana?), and his own name was that of Sarvathasiddha.”

In the *Buddha-ĉarita* of Aśvaghosha, śloka 11, 16, and 17, Professor Cowell's rendering, Māyā is poetically described in these words :

“Like a mother to her subjects, intent on their welfare, devoted to all worthy of reverence, like Devotion itself, shining on her lord's family like the goddess of prosperity, she was the most eminent of goddesses to the whole world. Verily the life of women is always darkness, yet when it encountered her it shone brilliantly: thus the night does not retain its gloom when it meets with the radiant crescent of the moon.” He goes on to relate the well-known legend of Buddha's descent as a white elephant and of his thus entering into Māyā's womb: “Then, fallen from the Tushita-body (abode), the already mentioned best Bodhisattva, illuminating the three worlds, entered just into *her* womb, as an elephant-king into a delightful cave.” (Śloka 19.)‡

* Translated by De Groot in *Le Code du Mahāyāna en Chine*.

† *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

‡ The Sanskrit original runs thus: “Cyuto 'tra kāyāt Tushitāt trilokīm uddyotayannuttamabodhisattvaḥ | viveśa tasyāḥ smṛita eva kukshau nandāguhāyāmiva nāgarājāḥ.”

It should be observed that, though Buddhist writers mention thirty-two superior signs of female excellence which must distinguish the mother of every Buddha (cf. Beal's *Romantic History*, p. 32), yet virginity is nowhere mentioned in such a connexion. Ex ea narratione tamen videtur creditum esse Buddae matrem, qua nocte ille conceptus sit, cum marito rem non habuisse. (This is clear from the *Mahāvastu*, Senart's edition, p. 5, śloka 15, sqq.) After her dream about the white elephant, in the *Romantic History*, Māyā says to Śuddhodana, “Posthac nulla corporis voluptate fruar.” Hinc apparet eam antea ab huiuscemodi delectatione prorsus non abstinuisse.

The result of our enquiry into the asserted relationship between Christianity and Mahâyâna Buddhism is therefore that the whole of the main principles of the two religions are totally opposed to each other. Their ideals are different, their aims are different, and what would be commended in the one system would be sternly condemned in the other. Such terms as *God, salvation, sin, prayer, eternal life, virtue*, and many others, convey to the Mahâyânist a meaning almost entirely contrary to that which a Christian understands by them. In the Mahâyânist view it is a terrible crime to kill and eat any living thing, but it is no harm to act as priest to Chinese worshippers of evil spirits, to offer adoration to an idol, or to incorporate Chinese, Japanese, or Tibetan gods into the pantheon. All things considered, the resemblance and even kinship between Christianity and the Greek and Roman forms of heathenism, with which it had in early days to contend to the death, was far closer than now exists between the Gospel of Christ and the corrupt Buddhism of the Far East. The invitation to recognize Mahâyânism as "an Asiatic form of the Gospel of Christ" is one which a study of the two religions forbids us to accept.

DISCUSSION.

The Rev. A. ELWIN said that anyone who had spent any length of time in China could not fail to come to the conclusion that Buddhism and Christianity were irreconcilably opposed. He himself had spent thirty years in China.

The Chinese speak much about the "Western Heaven." An entrance is won into the Western Heaven by the continual repetition of the formula O-mi-to Foh (Amida Buddha). In the morning, as one goes along the street, one may pass a shop sometimes, and hear a ceaseless buzzing sound; women are repeating these words as fast as they possibly can, counting the beads of their rosaries at the same time, each rosary having a hundred beads. It is not necessary in order to reap the advantage of these repetitions that one should repeat the sacred words oneself; it was sufficient to pay someone to do it for you, and the women in the shop were doing it for hire. In the Western Heaven there was neither sin, nor suffering, nor sickness, nor sorrow, nor women—for if a woman repeated the mystic words often enough, in the Western Heaven she became a man.

The paper we had just heard was very interesting; it was a paper to be prized, and to be kept by one for reference.

He knew Dr. Timothy Richard. He went out as a missionary to China to preach the Gospel. He wondered what Dr. Richard thought the Gospel really was: he could have no real grasp of it, or he could not have confused the two—Mahâyâna Buddhism and Christianity. Dr. Tisdall's conclusion was emphatically right: "A study of the two religions forbade us to recognize Mahâyânism as an Asiatic form of the Gospel of Christ."

Mr. M. L. ROUSE said that he had had the pleasure of listening to a lecture from Dr. Tisdall at St. Michael's, Cornhill. Dr. Tisdall said there that that which St. James had condemned, viz., saying to a needy person, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled," without giving those things which were needful for the body, was very poor Christianity, but it was quite good Buddhism.

The Rev. JOHN TUCKWELL said he was extremely grateful to Dr. Tisdall for a most valuable and important paper. He had been for many years interested in the Missionary Society which sent Dr. Richard out to China, and he believed he was correct in saying that his views when first published had excited great concern both in the Committee and the Denomination to which Dr. Richard belonged. But Dr. Richard had for many years been President of the "Christian Literature Society of China," and was now invalided, and had very little connection with any society whatever.

He congratulated the Victoria Institute on having had such a paper as that to which they had listened that afternoon. There was a tendency abroad to take little studies of heathen philosophy and associate them with the doctrines of Christianity under the title of "Comparative Religions." But there was in truth very little connection between Christianity and any other religion, or between the Bible and any other "sacred books." The Buddhistic view of the universe, however, appears to have much in common with the materialistic view of the universe with which Haeckel has made us familiar in his doctrine of Monism, by which he ascribes thought, emotion and will—in fact all the principal elements of personality, to his original uncreated monistic substance. Haeckel's substitute for God resembles very much the indefinable "Suchness" of Buddhism and the effort to correlate such heathen doctrines with the doctrines of Christianity could only have the effect of belittling Christianity.

Professor LANGHORNE ORCHARD said that they had listened to a paper of profound human interest.

In Haeckel's view, mind was developed out of matter; in the Buddhist manual, *The Awakening of Faith*, the same idea is brought forth. The root idea was that the universe was self-existent, without will or consciousness.

He would like to ask the Lecturer how he accounted for murders being so common in Buddhist countries, seeing that Buddhists were so careful of animal life. He would also like to ask what was the Buddhist's notion of sin.

The CHAIRMAN considered Buddhism to be a serious declension from Hinduism, the latter teaching a greater sense of sin. Buddhism was, therefore, even more than Hinduism, opposed in its spirit to Christianity.

False religions originating in declensions from, or corruptions of, the one true God-revealed religion, it was only reasonable to suppose that they would, more or less, retain traces of it, and touch it at certain points.

In Genesis i we are told of the Creation of the heavens and the earth. Were the heavens material or ethereal? If the latter, they would seem to correspond to the Buddhist Tao.

In the name of the Meeting, he asked Dr. Tisdall to accept their sincere thanks for his most admirable and instructive paper.

The LECTURER thanked the audience for the great attention which they had paid to what he feared was a dull paper.

The Buddhist's idea of sin was anything that tended to hinder progress toward Nirvana, or personal extinction; the opposite of this was the Buddhist idea of virtue. Sin, therefore, was to do that which was inexpedient. There was no sense of a breach of law, because there was no law, since there was no lawgiver.

With regard to the prevalence of murders in Ceylon, that was a region where Hinâyâna Buddhism prevailed, not Mahâyâna Buddhism. The reason of the small regard for human life seemed to be that no real distinction was felt between the ego of the man and that of the animal. Fish were killed for human food—why not a man if he stood in one's way, and if you were benefited by his death? The murdered person would revive in some other form.

The Buddhist use of holy water, of praying beads and the like, was earlier than their use by the Roman Catholics, who, therefore, could not have given them to the Buddhists.

The Meeting adjourned at 6 p.m.