

we had God for our protector, and that he would bring us through all adversities, according to his holy and immutable decrees.

The two young men, from whom I gleaned the above particulars, came to Bombay in the suite of the *vazir* of Kokan; their names were HAJI SHAH KU'LI and HAJI SHAH KALENDER; they were very young when they performed the pilgrimage, being now only about thirty and twenty-six years of age respectively. They have received a very good education, having a good acquaintance with the principal Persian authors, and are well versed in Muhammedan science; their father was a Mulla or Doctor of Law, and received his education partly at Kokan, and partly at Bokhara; he also travelled to Kabul to become initiated in Sufeism by a famous *nakshbandy pîr* or seer of that place.

III.—*European Speculations on Buddhism.* By B. H. HODGSON, Esq.
C. S. Resident at Nipal, &c.

In the late M. ABEL REMUSAT's review of my sketch of Buddhism, (*Journal des Savans*, Mai, 1831,) with the perusal of which I have just been favoured by Mr. J. PRINSEP, there occurs (p. 263) the following passage: "L'une des croyances les plus importantes, et celle sur laquelle l'essai de M. HODGSON fournit le moins de lumières, est celle des avénemens ou incarnations (*avatâra*). Le nom de *Tathâgata* (avenu*) qu'on donne à SAKIA n'est point expliqué dans son mémoire; et quant aux incarnations, le religieux dont les réponses ont fourni la substance de ce mémoire, ne semble pas en reconnoître d'autres que celles des sept Bouddhas. Il est pourtant certain qu'on en compte une infinité d'autres; et les lamas du Tibet se considèrent eux mêmes comme autant de divinités incarnées pour le salut des hommes."

I confess I am somewhat surprised by these observations, since whatever degree of useful information relative to Buddhism my essays in the *Calcutta and London Transactions* may furnish, they profess *not* to give *any*, (save *ex vi necessitatis*) concerning the 'veritable nonsense' of the system. And in what light, I pray you, is sober sense to regard "une infinité" of phantoms, challenging belief in their historical existence as the founders and propagators of a given code of laws? The *Lallita Vistara* gravely assigns 505, or according to another copy, 550, *avatâras* to SAKYA *alone*. Was I seriously to incline to the task of collecting and recording all that is attributed to these palpable *nomenclatives*? or, was it merely desired that I should explain the rationale of the doctrine of incarnation? If the latter only be the desideratum, here is a summary recapitulation of what I thought I had already sufficiently explained.

* A radical mistake; see the sequel.

The scale of Buddha perfectibility has countless degrees, several of which towards the summit express attributes really divine, however short of the transcendental glory of a *tathágata* in *nirvritti*. Nevertheless, these attributes appertain to persons subject to mortal births and deaths, of which the series is as little limited as is that scale of cumulative merits to which it expressly refers. But, if the scale of increasing merits, with proportionate powers in the occupiers of each grade, have almost infinite extent, and yet mortal birth cleave to every grade but the very highest, what wonder that men-gods should be common? or, that the appearance again in the flesh, of beings, who are far more largely gifted than the greatest of the *devatas*, should be called an *avatár*? Such *avatárs*, in all their successive mortal advents till they can reach the estate of a *tathágata*, are the *arhantas*, and the *bodhisatwas*, the *pratyéka* and the *srávaka-Buddhas*. They are gods and far more than gods; yet they were originally, and still quoad birth and death are, mere men. When I stated that the divine Lamas of Tibet are, in fact, *arhantas*; but that a very gross superstition had wrested the just notion of the character of the latter to its own use, I thought I had enabled every reader to form a clear idea of that marvel of human folly, the immortal mortals, or present palpable divinities of Tibet! How few and easy the steps from a theory of human perfectibility, with an apparently interminable metempsychosis, to a practical tenet such as the Tibetans hold!

But REMUSAT speaks of the incarnations of the *tathágatas*: this is a mistake, and a radical one. A *tathágata* may be such whilst yet lingering in the flesh of that mortal birth in which he reached this supreme grade;—and here, by the way, is *another* very obvious foundation for the Tibetan extravagance—but when once, by that body's decay, the *tathágata* has passed into *nirvritti*, he can never be again incarnated. The only true and proper *Buddha* is the *Maha Yánika* or *Tathágata Buddha*. Such are all the '*sapta Buddha*;' of whom it is abundantly certain that *not one* ever was, or by the principles of the creed, could be, incarnated. SAKYA'S incarnations all belong to the period preceding his becoming a *Tathágata*. Absolute quietism is the enduring state of a *Tathágata*: and, had it been otherwise, Buddhism would have been justly chargeable with a more stupendous absurdity than that from which REMUSAT in vain essays to clear it. '*Plusieurs absolus—plusieurs infinis*' there are; and they are bad enough, though the absolute infinity be restricted to the fruition of the subject. But the case would have been tenfold worse had activity been ascribed to these beings; for we should then have had an unlimited number of infinite ruling providences! The infinite of the Buddhists is *never* incarnated; nor the finite

of the Brahmans. *Avatārs* are an essential and consistent part of Brahmanism—an unessential and inconsistent part of Buddhism: and there is always this material difference between the *avatār* of the former and of the latter, that whereas in the one it is an incarnation of the supreme and infinite spirit, for recognised purposes of creation or rule; in the other, it is an incarnation of a mere human spirit—(however approximated by its own efforts to the infinite) and for what purpose it is impossible to say, consistently with the principles of the creed. I exclude here all consideration of the *dhyāni*, or celestial Buddhas, because REMUSAT'S reference is expressly to the seven *mānushi* or human ones.

The word *tathāgata* is reduced to its elements, and explained in three ways—1st, *thus gone*, which means gone in such a manner that he (the *tathāgata*) will never appear again; births having been closed by the attainment of perfection. 2nd, *thus got or obtained*, which is to say, (cessation of births) obtained, degree by degree, in the manner described in the Buddha scriptures, and by observance of the precepts therein laid down. 3rd, *thus gone*, that is, gone as it (birth) came—the pyrrhonic interpretation of those who hold that doubt is the end, as well as beginning, of wisdom; and that *that* which causes birth, causes likewise the ultimate cessation of them, whether that 'final close' be conscious immortality or virtual nothingness. Thus the epithet *tathāgata*, so far from meaning 'come' (*avenu*), and implying incarnation, as REMUSAT supposed, signifies the direct contrary, or 'gone for ever,' and expressly announces the impossibility of incarnation; and this according to all the schools, sceptical, theistic, and atheistic.

I shall not, I suppose, be again asked for the incarnations of the *tathāgatas**. Nor, I fancy, will any philosophical peruser of the above etymology of this important word have much hesitation in refusing, on this ground alone, any portion of his serious attention to the 'infinite' of Buddhist *avatārs*, such as they really are. To my mind they belong to the very same category of mythological shadows with the infinity of *distinct Buddhas*, which latter, when I first disclosed it as a fact in relation to the belief of these sectaries, led me to warn my readers "to keep a steady eye upon the authoritative assertion of the old scriptures, that SAKYA is the 7th and last of the *Buddhas*†."

The purpose of my two essays on Buddhism was to seize and render intelligible the *leading* and *least* absurd of the opinions and practices of these religionists, in order to facilitate to my countrymen the study of

* To the question, what is the *tathāgata*, the most holy of Buddhist scriptures returneth for answer, 'It does not come again, it does not come again.'

† Asiatic Researches, vol. xvi. p. 445.

an entirely new and difficult subject in those original Sanscrit authorities* which I had discovered and placed within their reach, but no living interpreters of which, I knew, were accessible to them, in Bengal or in Europe.

I had no purpose, nor have I, to meddle with the interminable sheer absurdities of the Bauddha philosophy or religion ; and, had I not been called upon for *proofs* of the numerous novel statements my two essays contained, I should not probably have recurred at all to the topic. But sensible of the prevalent literary scepticism of our day and race, I have answered that call, and furnished to the Royal Asiatic Society, a copious selection from those original works which I had some years previously discovered the existence of in Nipal. I trust that a further consideration of my two published essays, as illustrated by the new paper just mentioned, will suffice to remove from the minds of my continental readers most of those doubts of REMUSAT, the solution of which does not necessarily imply conversancy on my part with *details as absurd as interminable*. I cannot, however, be answerable for the mistakes of my commentators. One signal one, on the part of the lamented author in question, I have just discussed : others of importance I have adverted to elsewhere : and I shall here confine myself to the mention of one more belonging to the review from which I have quoted. In speaking of the classification of the people, REMUSAT considers the *vajra acharya* to be laics ; which is so far from being true that they and they alone constitute the clergy. The *bhikshuka* can indeed perform some of the lower offices of religion : but the *vajra acharya* solely are competent to the discharge of the higher ; and, in point of fact, are the only real clergy. That the distinction of *clerus et laicus* in this creed is altogether an anomaly, resulting from the decay of the primitive asceticism of the sect, I have endeavoured to shew elsewhere, and cannot afford room for repetition in this place.

The critics generally have been, I observe, prompt to adopt my caution relative to local superstitions, as opposed to the original creed of the Bauddhas. But they have carried their caution too far, and by so doing, have cast a shade of doubt and suspicion over things sufficiently entitled to exemption therefrom. Allow me, then, to reverse the medal,

* Nearly 50 vols. in Sanscrit, and four times as many in the language of Tibet, were sent by me to Calcutta between the years 1824, and 30. The former had never been before heard of, nor the latter possessed, by Europeans.

[See the notices of the contents of the Tibetan works and their Sanscrit originals by M. CASOMA DE KÖRÖS, and by Professor H. H. WILSON in the 3rd vol. *Gleanings*, and 1st vol. *Journal. As. Soc.*—ED.]

and to shew the grounds upon which a great degree of certainty and uniformity may always be presumed to exist in reference to this creed, be it professed where it may.

Buddhism arose in an age and country celebrated for literature; and the consequence was, that its doctrine and discipline were fixed by means of one of the most perfect languages in the world (Sanskrit), during, or immediately after, the age of its founder.

Nor, though furious bigots dispersed the sect, and attempted to destroy its records, did they succeed in the latter attempt. The refugees found, not only safety, but protection, and honour, in the *immediately* adjacent countries, whither they safely conveyed most of their books, and where those books still exist, either in the original Sanscrit, or in most carefully-made translations from it. The *Sata Sahasrika*, *Prajna Paramita*, and the nine *Dharmas*, discovered by me in Nipal, are as indisputably original evidence of Buddhism as the *Védas* and *Puránas* are of Brahmanism. The *Káhyur* of Tibet has been *proved* to have been rendered into Tibetan from Sanscrit, with pains and fidelity: and if the numerous books of the Burmese and Ceylonese be not originals, it is certain that they were translated in the earlier ages of Buddhism, and that they were rendered into a language (high Prakrit) which, from its close affinity to that of the original books of the sect, (Sanskrit,) must have afforded the translators every facility in the prosecution of their labours.

But if the Buddhists, whether of the continent or islands of India, or of the countries beyond the former, still possess and consult the primitive *scriptures* of their faith, *either in the original language, or in careful translations, made in the best age of their church*—wherefore, I would fain know, should European scholars, from their study, incessantly prate about mere *local* rites and opinions, constituting the substance of whatever is told to the intelligent traveller by the present professors of this faith in diverse regions—nay, constituting the substance of whatever he can glean from their books? In regard to Nipal, it is just as absurd to insinuate, that the *Prajna Paramita*, and the nine *Dharmas* were composed in that country, and have exclusive reference to it, as to say that the Hebrew Old, or Greek New, Testament was composed in and for Italy, France, or Spain exclusively. Nor is it much less absurd to affirm, that the Buddhism of one country is *essentially* unlike the Buddhism of any and every other country professing it, than it would be to allege the same of Christianity.

Questionless, in the general case, documentary is superior to verbal evidence. But the superiority is not without limit: and where, on the one hand, the books referred to by our closet students are numerous and difficult, and respect an entirely new subject, whilst, on the other

hand, our personal inquirers have time and opportunity at command, and can question and cross-question intelligent witnesses, the result of an appeal to the living oracles will oft times prove as valuable as that of one to the dead.

Let the closet student, then, give reasonable faith to the traveller, even upon this subject; and, whatever may be the general intellectual inferiority of the orientals of our day, or the plastic facility of change peculiar to every form of polytheism, let him not suppose that the living followers of Buddha *cannot* be profitably interrogated touching the creed they live and die in; and, above all, let him not presume that a religion fixed, at its earliest period, by means of a noble written language, has no identity of character in the several countries where it is now professed, notwithstanding that that identity has been guarded, up to this day, by the possession and use of original scriptures, or of faithful translations from them, which were made in the best age of this church.

For myself, and with reference to the latter point, I can safely say that my comparisons of the *existing* Buddhism of Nipal, with that of Tibet, the Indo-Chinese nations, and Ceylon, as reported by our local inquirers, as well as with that of *ancient* India itself, as evidenced by the sculptures of Gya*, and of the cave temples of Aurungabad, have satisfied me that this faith possesses as much identity of character in all times and places as any other we know, of equal antiquity and diffusion†.

* See the explanation of these sculptures by a Nipalese Buddhist in the Quarterly Oriental Magazine, No. XIV. pp. 218, 222.

† As a proof of the close agreement of the Buddha systems of different countries, we may take this opportunity of quoting a private letter from Colonel BURNEY, relative to the 'Burmese Philosopher Prince,' MEKKHARA MEN, the king of Ava's uncle.

"The prince has been reading with the greatest interest M. CSOMA DE KÖRÖS's different translations from the Tibet scriptures in your Journal, and he is most anxious to obtain the loan of some of the many Tibetan works, which the Society is said to possess. He considers many of the Tibetan letters to be the same as the Burmese, particularly the *b*, *m*, *n*, and *y*. He is particularly anxious to know if the monastery called Zedawuna still exists in Tibet, where according to the Burmese books, GODAMA dwelt a long time, and with his attendant ANANDA planted a bough which he had brought from the great *pīpal* tree, at Buddha-Gaya. The prince is also anxious to know whether the people of Tibet wear their hair as the Burmese do? how they dress, and how their priests dress and live? The city in which the monastery of Zedawuna stood, is called in the Burmese scriptures *Thawotthi*, and the prince ingeniously fancies, that Tibet must be derived from that word. The Burmese have no *s*, and always use their soft *th*, when they meet with that letter in *Pali* or foreign words—hence probably *Thawotthi* is from some Sanscrit name Sawot. I enclose a list of countries and cities mentioned in the

P. S.—Whether RĀMUSAR'S 'avenu' be understood loosely, as meaning come, or strictly, as signifying come to pass, it will be equally inadmissible as the interpretation of the word *Tathāgata*; because *Tathāgata* is designed expressly to announce that all reiteration and contingency whatever is barred with respect to the beings so designated. They cannot come; nor can any thing come to pass affecting them*.

And if it be objected, that the mere use of the word *avenu*, in the past tense, does not necessarily imply such reiteration and conditional futurity, I answer that RĀMUSAR clearly meant it to convey these ideas, or what was the sense of calling on me for the successive incarnations of these *avenus*? It has been suggested to me that *absolu*, used substantively, implies activity. Perhaps so, in Parisian propriety of speech. But I use it merely as opposed to relative with reference to *mere* mortals; and I trust that the affirmation—there are many absolutes, many infinites, who are nevertheless inactive—may at least be distinctly understood. I have nothing to do with the reasonableness of the tenet so affirmed or stated, being only a reporter.

IV.—*Geological Section across the Valley of the Nerbudda, from Tendukhéri to Bittoul.* By J. G. SPILSBURY, Esq. *Ben. Med. Est.* Plate XXIII.

In your No. for November last, you expressed a wish that some one should give you a section of the geological features of the country from Tendukhéri to the hills south of the Nerbudda. Opportunity has been afforded me of making such a trip, and as probably you may not receive an account from one versed in the subject, I send you such notes as I made on the excursion, together with specimens of the rocks met with.

The conical hill to the S. E. near Tendukhéri is the point from which I started, the same to which Captain FRANKLIN alludes in the 1st part of the Transactions of the Physical Class of the Asiatic Society, and which he describes as being capped with basaltic columns.

The specimens from this hill are T 1, forming a platform with T 1 *a* mixed in detached pieces. Above the platform are trap boulders reaching Burmese writings, as the scene of GODAMA'S adventures, to which if the exact site and present designation of each can be assigned from the Sanscrit or the Tibet authorities, it will confer an important favor on Burmese literati." It is highly interesting to see the spirit of inquiry stirring in the high places of this hitherto benighted nation. The information desired is already furnished, and as might be expected, the Burmese names prove to be copied through the *Prakrit* or *Pañi*, directly from the Sanscrit originals, in this respect differing from the Tibetan which are translations of the same name.—ED.

* *Avenu* signifies *quod evenit, contigit*, that which hath happened.—(*Dictionnaire de Trevoux.*) *Tathāgata*; *tathā* thus (what really is), *gata* (known, obtained).—(WILSON'S Sans. Dict.)—ED.