

"Four things are necessary to constitute a lie: 1. There must be the utterance of the thing that is not. 2. There must be the knowledge that it is not. 3. There must be some endeavor to prevent the person addressed from learning the truth. 4. *There must be the discovery by the person deceived that what has been told him is not true.*"

I venture to italicize this fourth and last particular. I ask every reader very carefully to consider it:

"There must be the discovery by the person deceived that what has been told him is not true."

I beg to have it distinctly observed that I do not ascribe the words foregoing to Buddha. Just what Buddha taught no one now knows. Hundreds of years elapsed after his death before any attempt was made to put his teaching into written form. To Buddhism, not to Buddha, I credit the instruction on the subject of lying to which I invite your attention; to Buddhism as the system now actually exists where it is considered to have maintained itself purest—namely, in the island of Ceylon. Will my readers attend to this Buddhist ethical instruction once more? In order that there be a lie—

"There must be the discovery by the person deceived that what has been told him is not true."

Let me repeat that I thus transfer the exact words of Mr. R. Spence Hardy, given by him, without note or comment, in his "Manual of Buddhism," page 486, substantially a body of mere strict translation from the purest text obtainable of the accepted books of Buddhism. Mr. Hardy, I may add, is an authority on his subject, always quoted from with unquestioning confidence by those whose names stand highest for character and scholarship among specialists in Oriental literature.

I have sincerely exercised my utmost ingenuity *in vain* to find some other than the obvious way of understanding the Buddhist statement submitted—some way that would relieve it of its apparent ethical monstrosity. I say it under correction, but apparently we find in the ethics of Buddhism the wholesome prohibition of lying, accompanied with the explanation that if, however, one lies successfully enough not to get found out by the person lied to, one does not lie at all.

I thus offer an illustration of the manner in which it is quite possible so to teach the truth as to make the truth itself minister to falsehood. The ethical truth implied in the precept against lying—namely, the truth that lying is wrong, is in Buddhism related to the falsehood that successful lying is not lying in such a way that the precept with its accompaniment becomes rather a challenger to skill in the liar's art than a deterrent from the liar's sin.

If space were allowed me for the purpose I could easily show that the further capital precept in Buddhist ethics which forbids the taking of life is similarly made void, nay, absolutely, vitally, vicious and mischievous,