

to know and subdue himself. He forsook friends and wife and children, and retired from the world. The most rigid discipline and profoundest study of his country's philosophy and religion proved ineffectual. He abandoned such study and decided to seek independently a way of deliverance, if such could be. By deep and protracted meditation, he happened on the Truth, became the "Enlightened" (Budda), gathered disciples, and started a philosophy, a religion, and a social reform. "Myth," "legend," says the Western, modern higher critic. But the Buddhist world is as firm in its faith that the Buddha was an historical person as the Christian is that Christ was, or the Chinese, Confucius. Having displaced the national faith, this misionary religion swept over Asia, threatened Europe, and became the only moral stay of a fifth of the human race.

Yet Buddhism started with no soul and no god. It denied the existence of a creator and of an absolute being. A system which saw man a part of an universe, and specially emphasized "cause and effect," declared for an uncaused universe and an uncaused law. To the Veda, held by every Brahmin to be a Divine revelation, the Buddha accorded no superior authority. Brahminism made the Absolute the only reality; with Buddhism even this was not real. No Absolute, no ultimate absorption. The secret which the Buddha found was to end suffering; and this could be done only by ending existence.

But Buddhism has been as flexible, as aggressive and as elective as widespread. In its progress through the years it has taken on nearly a god. Metaphysics never satisfies the masses. Neither does the doctrine of mere self-help. Believe what men may, there is a felt need of assistance from something outside and higher than self. After Buddha's death, his followers, blinking annihilation, looked to him still to help them somehow. About the dawn of Christianity, he was raised to the rank of a deity. Chinese sages regarded the Buddha of the West as a Divine person before the advent of Buddhism to their country in the first century A.D. Present Chinese Buddhism is well known to be polytheistic—permitted, say some few of the philosophers, to satisfy the lower orders of the people. Nevertheless, it is an integral part and conspicuous feature of Chinese