

**PRIMITIVE BUDDHISM,
ITS ORIGIN
AND TEACHINGS**

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Primitive Buddhism, its origin and teachings by Elizabeth A. Reed

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ELIZABETH A. REED

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PREFACE.

THE philosophies of the East have often been presented to the western world during the last few years, and much interest has been awakened, especially in the subject of Buddhism. Although the number of its adherents has been greatly overestimated, still this system controls, to a greater or less extent, the thought of millions of our fellow-beings, and it is entitled to a fair and impartial examination. There are comparatively few people, however, in this busy age, who have time to make an exhaustive research on the subject, and it is thought, therefore, that a comprehensive handbook, which has been carefully prepared, will be welcome to many, who will be glad to learn, quickly and easily, what this philosophy really is.

It is not the object of the present work to follow the system in the various changes through which it has passed, or to discuss the protean forms which it has assumed in modern times, but to present, in as brief a manner as is consistent with accuracy, the

authoritative teachings of primitive and genuine Buddhism.

It would appear that such works are greatly needed from the fact that theories have been advocated as the doctrines of Buddhism of which its founder never heard, and statements have been made upon the modern platform which could astonish no one so much as Gautama and his early followers. When speculation is rife upon any subject, the truth can only be obtained by an appeal "to the law and the testimony." Every system has a right to demand that it be judged by its own official documents, and, therefore, the utmost care has been taken to present, in condensed form, the doctrines of the early Buddhists, as set forth in their own standard works.

Quotations have not only been accurately made, but the references are given, so that they may be easily verified, as the books belonging to the Buddhistic canon are now available to the English-speaking world, and they may be found in many of our libraries. Among the best in this respect is the Chicago Public Library, where a wealth of Oriental lore is ever at the service of the student.

The selections in the present volume have been made from the official documents of the early Buddhists, as found in the Sacred Books of the East and elsewhere. These are authorities which no scholar will

question, and it will be found that the integrity of the text has been sufficiently maintained.

Besides the books belonging to the canon, the author is indebted to the works and, in some cases, to the private correspondence, also, of the most accomplished Orientalists in the world of scholars. It is a pleasure to acknowledge one's indebtedness to such men as Prof. James Legge, Sir Monier Monier-Williams, K. C. I. E., Prof. F. Max Müller, Rhys Davids, Oldenberg, Prof. A. H. Sayce, Burnouf, Barthélemy Saint Hilaire and others, the credits being given where the quotations are made.

Especial thanks are also due to the distinguished savants who have carefully examined portions of the manuscript, and given it the benefit of their invaluable criticism. The principal points in the tenth chapter were presented by the author, in a paper recently read before the Victoria Institute, or Philosophical Society of Great Britain, and before it was accepted there, it was submitted, by the officers of the Institute, to the leading scholars of the world in this particular field of letters.

Hence, it is offered to the public only after it has been honored, by critical examination and thoughtful discussion, by eminent Orientalists.

Cordial thanks are due the American press for generous notices of the author's previous works, in many