SIMILARITY BETWEEN BUDDHISM AND EARLY TAOISM.

The earliest form of religion in China seems to have been the worship of Heaven, Earth, ancestors, and the spirits supposed to reside in stars, mountains, rivers, and various other objects of nature. It was apparently connected with the religions of the Parsees, Hindus and other Eastern people and also with the plan of the cosmos known to the early Platonic Schools, and so there might have been a deity corresponding to Ahuramasda, the Supreme Being of the Zoroastrians. Taoism may have been a mixture of the Parsee dualistic system in nature, and Buddhism pure and simple. Mr. Mayers says that it was derived from the speculations of Hindu thought, and that Laotzu's disciples grafted on his teaching a code of philosophy, which was on the one hand a travesty of Buddhism, and on the other developed into a School of mysticism, and researches into the arts of transmuting metals into gold, and ensuring longevity or admission into the ranks of the genii. Edkins saw over the south gate of the town of Taihuai on his journey to Wutaishan a small temple dedicated to Hormosda Tingri, whom he identifies with the chief Taoist divinity Yuh Huang Shang-ti. Hormosda resembles Ahuramasda. It is worthy of note, too, that the name Zoroaster or Zarathustra, compounded of *Zarat* and *Ushtra*, exactly translates Laochün, venerable prince, the so-called founder of the Taoist faith. On the other hand the term Tao-ssü 道師 (Tapasvi) applied to the Taoists, was a common Buddhistic term for ascetics of all denominations, and the Ficus religiosa or Bodhidruma, under which Sakyamuni sat until he gained perfect wisdom, was called Tao shu or the tree of intelligence [Eitel's Buddhism]. Tao should accordingly be the deification of wisdom. There must have been Buddhists in China as early as the 3rd century B.C. if one may believe the tradition that a pagoda at Wutaishan was one of the 84,000 pagodas, containing relics of Buddha, erected by King Asoka. In the 7th year of Chaowang of the Yen State (B.C. 305) a man professing doctrines of Tao, called Sila 尸羅 (Sanskrit for 'moral

commentator, subjoined to a passage elsewhere (*Han Books, Section 99, part 2*) that our Liu Hin had yet other titles and designations, not mentioned above, and that he is to be distinguished from a contemporary of his also called Liu Hin. Sze Ku says, 'Above we found one Liu Hin, marquis of Hung-yiu, referred to as having been appointed State Preceptor 國師 and Duke of Kia-sin 嘉新; but here one Liu Hin is mentioned and designated Earl of K'i-lieh 祁烈, whilst a third person is referred to under the designation "Marquis of Hung-yiu and son of Liu Hin the State Preceptor." Hence it is clear that the Earl of K'i-lieh called Liu Hin was a person quite distinct from Liu Hin the State Preceptor.' To this note of Sze Ku, I think it well to add that our Liu Hin, *alias* Liu Siu, the State Preceptor, must further be distinguished from another Liu Siu, the founder of the Eastern Han dynasty, who was also a contemporary of his.—E. J. E.

purity'), appeared in China. He said he was 130 years old, and that he came from the country of Musu 沐胥 also known as Shêntu 申毒 or India, which he had left five years previously. He performed numerous magical tricks, one of which consisted in causing a ten-storied Fout'u 浮圖 pagoda, three feet high, with images of people five or six inches long, walking and dancing round it, to grow out of the tip of his finger [see 拾遺記 vol. 4). This individual was clearly a Buddhist monk, and there was no doubt a good deal of mysticism among the early Buddhist missionaries, by which they commended their religion to the superstitious minds of the Chinese. Dr. Williams says that Buddhism found little favour in China before the Han dynasty, while other authors declare that the religion was not introduced into China until the Emperor Mingti, seeing a metal image of the western god in a dream, was told that this was Buddha, and sent envoys to India for teachers of the doctrine (A.D. 65). The historical records of Ssumach'ien tell us however of metal images and holy men long before this date. In B.C. 221 the Emperor Shihuang (the First) melted his weapons, and cast some bells and 12 'metal men' (金人), each weighing 1,000 piculs, he having already seen some metal images at Lint'iao. The Buddhist recluses seem to have first established themselves in that part of China, now known as Shantung and Chihli, for in B.C. 219 the same Emperor sent for a holy man said to reside on the island of P'ênglai, supposed to lie off the Shantung coast; and again in B.C. 215 Lushêng, a native of the state of Yen, was sent to request the presence of a Sienmên 羨門 called 高誓 or 子高. I presume Sienmên represents S'ramana, an ascetic or hermit. Again, in the year B.C. 120 the Chinese general Hochuping, having gained a decisive victory over the Hsiutu, a tribe said to have had their headquarters somewhere in the present province of Kansu, carried off as a trophy a 'metal man' stated to have been used in worshipping Heaven. A commentator adds, 'the Buddhists venerate these metal men, and they are now called Buddhist images.' But who was Laotzu, and what connection is there between him and Buddha? Ssumach'ien gives a very scanty biography. He says, 'Laotzu was a native of grievous benevolence alley, severe village, misery town in the State of suffering. He was named Lîerh 李耳 (plum ear), Poyang (superior male principle) and Heavy Ear, and his posthumous title was Tan. When keeper of the records at the Court of Chow, Confucius came to ask him a question about ceremonies, but was told to get rid of his pride, his passions, affected manner, and wild imaginations; whereupon he retired and told his disciples that Laotzu resembled a dragon. Laotzu cultivated Tao (Wisdom) and lived some time as a recluse, then foreseeing the decadence of the Kingdom of Chow he retired, and on going through the Hanku pass, he, at the desire of Kuanyinhsi (or the governor of the pass Hsi), wrote a book in two parts, containing 5000 words called Taotêching (Book of Wisdom and Virtue), after which he departed to unknown regions. The doctrines of Lîerh were inaction, transmigration of souls, purity and quiet, and correct conduct.' The historian continues: 'Some say that the recorder of Chow named Tan (詹 a load) who visited Prince Hsien of the Ch'in dynasty B.C. 374, when he prophesied the rise of a great chief seventy years afterwards, was also Laotzu.' There is a stray remark in the 3rd chapter of the 'Records' to the effect that father Poyang foretold, in the year 380 B.C., that the house of Chow would fall into decadence within ten years. Laotzu must, according to the historian, have lived at least 250, and possibly 400 years. The name Lîerh should perhaps be written thus: 離耳 (slit-ear) for in the Hill and Sea Classic, 10th chapter, we read, 'The slit ear country is so called because the inhabitants cut slits in their ears and make them hang down in an ornamental way, they are

also known as Tanêrh (hanging ears) and they live on Chuyai (pearl cliff) an island in the sea.' Now 'hanging ear' was the name given to three districts in the west of the island of Hainan, the rest of the island being known as Pearl Cliff during the Han dynasty, and the former name was said to have been so given because the chief men of those districts carried weights in their ears, which causes them to hang three inches below the shoulder. The province of Tanêrh, we must remember, was established B.C. 111, as one of the nine Nanyueh provinces, so that it is possible that the application of the terms Liêrh, (slit ear) and Tanêrh (hanging ear) to a person called the Venerable one, may have been made about that period, and perhaps points to the arrival of Buddhist monks from the south of China with heavy ornaments in their ears. The name Kuanyinhsi is perhaps an attempt to represent the word generally written 觀世音 or Avalokitesvara, the Hindoo divinity whose worship is so popular in China. The names of the locality where Laotzu was born, I take it, hint at the austere asceticism through which Buddha passed to gain Nirvana. The history of gods and immortals gives various incarnations of Laotzu, which occurred during the Chow dynasty, and one of them is remarkable. It is said that the lady Maya conceived on seeing a dazzling light, and that, having gone to sleep, Laotzu descended from the Tuchita heaven, and in the form of a white elephant entered her mouth on the 8th day of the 4th moon of the year B.C. 648 or 608, that she caught hold of the bough of a tree when she was painlessly delivered of a son who came out of her right side. At his birth there was an earthquake and flashes of five-coloured light. The babe walked seven steps, and, pointing both to heaven and to earth, pronounced with a lion's voice the words 'between these two great things I alone am to be honoured.' Two dragon spirits appeared and he was bathed. From the earth there sprang a lotus flower, which enveloped his feet. His body exhibited 32 strange marks and eighty 'forms of beauty.' He was called 悉達多 (Siddharta). He resolved to leave the world, and on seeing a monk, an old man, a sick man, and a corpse, was told that his time had come. He was then nineteen years of age. Dwelling on Dantalokagiri mountain he meditated on Tao, and entered the state of abstraction. He at first studied three years with Arata Calama, and then with 蔚頭藍 (Rudraka) for a year. Hearing that there was in the east a golden locust called Dipamkara who had attained complete wisdom, he did not rest, but in three years reached China, and talked with Dipamkara for thirteen days, afterwards he went westward, called himself Sakyamuni and lived for six years on Gridhrakuta mountain on one grain of hemp and one grain of wheat a day, teaching his doctrines. Having become enlightened he was called Buddha. Arriving at 那乾訶羅 (? Gandhara) he ordered Vadjrapani to fight with dragons and ghosts. Buddha then went to Benares, turned the wheel of the law and talked doctrine in the deer park with five disciples of whom one was Kaundinya. He died at Kusinagara, and his remains being put into a golden coffin he was cremated. Other details are given, but the above is sufficient to shew that Laotzu is identified with Buddha in this account. The words Fout'u and Fo do not seem to have been used in the histories until the time of the After Han or subsequent to the beginning of the Christian era, and then in strange conjunction with the words Huanglao and Laotzu. Quoting from the book of the After Han we find that Liuying, prince of of Ch'u (A.D. 10), although 'wild and fond of society in his youth became in old age addicted to the teachings of Huanglao' (the yellow venerable). Studying to become a Fout'u, he practised asceticism, and performed acts of worship. [Note.—The Han record of Yuanhun says, Fout'u is the same as Fo (Buddha)]. 'In the western regions India possesses the Tao of Buddha.

The word Fo means enlightened, or having full knowledge of every living thing. The religion consists mainly in cultivating virtue, having a benevolent heart, not killing any living thing, and devoting one's self to a life of purity and rest. The priests of the religion are called Shaman, a word which means quiet. They seek to banish desire, and attain to a state of inaction. They also say that when a man dies, his soul does not die, but takes another bodily form, that the good and bad deeds in the man's life will be recompensed, and they shew honour to one who does virtuous actions and cultivates Tao, so as to discipline the animal spirits until he reaches a state of freedom from desire and becomes a Buddha. Buddha is 16 feet high, of a yellow gold colour, with a bright halo round his head; he can metamorphose himself into any shape, is ubiquitous, and succours every living thing. The Emperor Mingti saw in a dream a huge golden (or metal) man with a halo round his head, and, enquiring of his officers what this meant, was told that there was a god called Buddha in the west, and that this was doubtless the figure he had seen in his dream. He thereupon sent envoys to India, who enquired about the tenets of the religion and brought back a representation of Buddha. In the year 65 the Minister of State wished to know His Majesty's pleasure, stating that the prince of Ch'u (Liuying) recited the mysterious language of Huanglao, was fond of the charitable teachings of Fou-t'u, practised asceticism three months in the year, and offered prayers to the god, his conduct being quite inoffensive and above suspicion, that he regretted that rolls of silk should be wasted in buying off criminals sentenced to death, and wished to provide instead banquets for the upasaka Sramana (lay members of the Buddhist Church. Eitel.) A proclamation authorising this having been published throughout the Empire, Liuying became very intimate with the priests. A golden tortoise and stork of jade were made and characters being engraved on them they were used as talismans.' In the 88th chapter of the same book we read 'the Emperor Huan-ti (A.D. 147-167) liked the mysterious religion, worshipped Fout'u Laotzu, and the people being by degrees converted, the preaching of the doctrine spread.' The words Fout'u Laotzu (Buddha the venerable one) can hardly refer to any other religion but Buddhism. Huanglao is a name given in the history of gods and immortals to the first of the gods, who was produced from a bright flash of light shooting from a star, and who resided on mount Sumeru, the centre of the Buddhist universe. The doctrines of 'Huanglao,' and those of 'Huangti Laotzu,' which Ssuma-ch'ien refers to so often, seem then to be simple Buddhism, and if so we can prove that Buddhism was a power in China during the Ch'in dynasty after the year 221 B.C. The matter however requires to be more thoroughly investigated than I have been able to do. It is possible that the story of a person called Laotzu being keeper of the records at the court of Chow about the year B.C. 520, that Confucius went to visit him, and that he (Lao-tzu) wrote a book called the Taotêching are pure inventions of the historian. The Taotêching itself, which treats chiefly of charity, humility, sincerity, abstention from desire, silent contemplation, purity, and inaction, might very well have been a Buddhist work written in the 2nd century, B.C.

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