The Higher Buddhism.
Philosophical Buddhism requires some brief consideration in this place, for two reasons. The first and that reason is the apprehension and ignorance of the subject has rendered possible the change of atheism against the intellectual classes of Japan. The second reason is that many persons imagine the Japanese common people—indeed, the greater part of the nation—profess the doctrine of Nirvana as extinction (though, as a matter of fact, even the meaning of the word is unknown to the masses), and quite resigned to vanish into the face of the earth, because of that desire for posthumous amelioration which the doctrine is supposed to create. A little serious thinking ought to convince any intelligent
man that no such creed could ever have been the recipient of either a savage or a civilized people.

But, myriads of Western minds are ready at all times to accept statements of impossibility without taking the trouble to think about them; and if I can show some of my readers how far beyond popular comprehension the doctrines of the highest Buddhism really are, something will have been accomplished for the cause of truth and common-sense. And besides the reasons already given for dwelling upon the subject, there is this third and special reason—that it is one of extraordinary interest to the student of modern philosophy.

"3 lds"

Before going further, I must remind you that the metaphysic,
Buddhism can be studied anywhere else, quite as well as in Japan, since the more important sutras have been translated into various European languages, and most of the untranslated texts exist as published. The texts of Japanese Buddhism are Chinese; and only Chinese scholars are competent to throw light upon the minor special phases of the subject. Even to read the Chinese Buddhist canon of 7000 volumes is considered as an impossible task, though it has certainly been accomplished in Japan. Then there are the commentaries, the various interpretations of different texts, the multiplications of later doctrine to heap confusion upon confusion. The complexities of Japanese Buddhism are incalculable; and those who try to unravel them soon become, as a general rule, hopelessly lost in
He may of delight. All this has nothing to do with my present purpose. I shall have very little to say about Japanese Buddhism as distinguished from other Buddhism, and nothing at all to say about sect-differences. I shall keep to general facts as regards the higher doctrine, selecting from among such facts my more most suitable for the illustration of that doctrine.

Here I shall not take up the subject of Nirvāṇa, in spite of its great importance, having treated it as fully as I was able in my "Gleanings in Buddhist Fields," but content myself with the topic of certain analogies between the conclusions of Buddhist metaphysics and the conclusions of contemporary Western thought.
In the best single volume yet produced in English on the subject of Buddhism*, the late Mr. Henry Clarke Warren observed: "A large part of the pleasure that I have experienced in the study of Buddhism has arisen from what I may call the strangeness of the intellectual landscape. All the ideas, the modes of argument, even the postulates assumed and not argued about, have always seemed so strange, so different from anything with which I have been accustomed, that I felt all the time as though walking in Fairyland. Much of the charm that the Oriental thought and ideas have for me appears to be because they are so seldom fit in to..."
Western categories... The serious attraction of Buddhist philosophy could not be better suggested: it is indeed "the strangeness of the intellectual landscape"—as of a world inside-out and upside-down—that has chiefly interested Western thinkers here before. Yet after all, there is a class of Buddhist concepts which can be fitted, or very nearly fitted, into Western categories. The higher Buddhism is a kind of Monism, and it includes doctrines that accord, in the most surprising manner, with the scientific ideas of the German and the English monists. To my thinking, the most curious part of the subject, and its main interest, is represented just by these accordances,
particular in view of the fact that the Buddhist conclusions have been reached through mental processes as known in Western thinking, and unaided by any knowledge of science... I venture to call myself a disciple of Herbert Spencer; and it was because of my acquaintance with his Synthetic Philosophy that I came to find in Buddhist philosophy a more than romantic interest. For Buddhism is also a theory of evolution — though the great central idea of our scientific evolution (the law of progress from homogeneity to heterogeneity) is not correspondingly implied by Buddhist doctrine as regards the life of this world. The course of evolution as we conceive it, according to Professor Huxley,
"must describe a trajectory like that of a ball fired from a mortar; and the sinking half of that course is as much a part of the general process of evolution as the rising."
The highest point of the trajectory would represent what Mr. Spencer calls Equilibration,—the supreme point of development preceding the period of decline;—but, in Buddhist evolution this supreme point vanishes in Nirvana.
I can best illustrate the Buddhist position by asking you to imagine the trajectory line upside down,—a course descending out of the infinite, touching ground, and ascending again to mystery.... Nevertheless, some Buddhist ideas do offer the most standing analogy with the evolutionary ideas of our own time; and
Even more Buddhist concepts more remote from Western thought can be best under-
stood by the help of illustrating art of language borrowed from modern
science.

I think that we may consider the most remarkable teachings of the Higher Buddhism, excluding the doctrine of Nirvana, for the reason already given, to be the following:

That there is but one

Reality;—

That the consciousness is not the real Dece;

That Matter is an aggregate of phenomena created
by the force of acts and thoughts;—
That all objective and subjective existence is made by Karma, the present being the creation of the past, and the actions of the present and the past in combination, determining the conditions of the future... (Or, in other words, that the universe of Matter and the universe of Mind, represent in their evolution a strictly moral order.)

And we will now briefly consider these doctrines in their relation to modern thought, beginning with the first, which is Materialism...
All things having form or name, - Buddhas, gods, men, and all living creatures, - suns, worlds, moons, the whole visible cosmos, - are transitory phenomena... Assuming, with Herbert Spencer, that the 'reality of reality' is permanence, one can scarcely question this position; - it differs little from the statement with which the closing chapter of the First Principles concludes:

"Though the relation of subject and object renders necessary to us these ancil-
theoretical conceptions of Spirit and Matter, the one is no less than the other to be regarded as but a sign of the Unknown Reality which underlies both." - (Sri Aurobindo, 1894.)
For Buddhism the sole reality is the Absolute — Buddha as unconditioned and Infinite Being. There is no other veritable existence, whether of Matter or of Mind; there is no real individuality or personality; the "I" and the "Not-I" are essentially converse different. We are reminded of Mr. Spencer's position, that "It is one and the same reality which is manifested in us both subjectively and objectively."

Mr. Spencer goes on to say: — "Subject and Object, as actually existing, can never be contained in the consciousness produced by the cooperation of the two, though they are necessarily implied by it; — and the antithesis of Subject and Object, never to be transcended while consciousness lasts, renders impossible all knowledge of that..."
Ultimate Reality in which Subject and Object are united? I do not think that a master of the higher Buddhism would dispute Mr. Spencer's doctrine of Transfigured Realism. Buddhism does not deny the actuality of phenomena as phenomena, but denies their permanence, and the truth of the appearances which they present to our imperfect senses. Being transitory, and not what they seem, they are to be considered in the nature of illusions — in permanent manifestations of the only permanent Reality. But the Buddhist position is not agnosticism: it is astonishingly different, as we shall presently see. Mr. Spencer states that we cannot know the Reality so long as consciousness lasts, — because finite consciousness
land we cannot however the anthesis of object and subject, and it is his way and their which makes consciousness possible. "Very true," the Buddhist metaphysician would reply; "we cannot know the sole Reality while consciousness lasts. But destroy consciousness, and the Reality becomes cognizable. annihilate the illusion of mind, and the truth will come." This destruction of consciousness signifies Nirvāṇa, the extinction of all that we call Self. Self is blindness: destroy it, and the Reality will be revealed as infinite vision and infinite peace.
We have now to ask what, according to Buddhist philosophy, is the meaning of the visible universe as phenomenon, and the nature of the consciousness that perceives. However transitory, the phenomenon makes an impression upon consciousness; our consciousness is self, though transitory, has existence; and in perception, however delusive, are perceptions of actual relations. Buddhism answers that both the universe and the consciousness are merely aggregates of Karma, complexity indiscernible of conditioned shaped by acts and thought through some enormous past. All substance and all conditioned mind (as distinguished from unconditioned mind) are products.
of acts and thoughts: by acts and thoughts the abodes of them have been degraded; and the affinities of those abodes, — the polarities of them, as a scientist might say, — represent tendencies shaped in countless vanished lives. I may quote here from a modern Japanese writer on the subject:

"The aggregate actions of all sentient beings give birth to the varieties of mountains, rivers, countries, etc. They are caused by aggregate actions, and so are called aggregate fruits. Our present life is the reflection of past actions. Men consider these reflections as their real selves. Their eyes, noses, ears, tongues, and bodies, as well as their gardens, woods, farms, residences, servants, and maids, — men imagine to be their own possessions; but, in fact,
they are only results endlessly produced by innumerable actions. In tracing every thing back to the ultimate limit of the past, we cannot find a beginning: hence it is said that death and birth have no beginning. Again when seeking the ultimate limit of the future, we cannot find its end.” *

This teaching that all things are formed by Karma,—whatever is good in the universe representing the results of meritorious acts or thoughts; and whatever is evil, the results of evil acts or thoughts,—has the approval of five of the great sects; and we may accept it as a leading doctrine of Japanese Buddhism... The cosmos is, then, an aggregate of Karma; and the mind

* "Essays of the Mahayana Philosophy," by O. Kuroda,
of man is an aggregate of Karma; and the beginnings thereof are unknown, and the end cannot be imagined. There is a spiritual evolution, of which the goal is Nirvana; but we have no declaration as to a final state of universal rest, when the shaping of substance and of mind will have ceased forever.

Now the Dyalnic Philosophy assumes a very similar position as regards the evolution of phenomena: there is no beginning or evolution, nor any conceivable end. I quote from Mr. Spencer's reply to a critic in the *North American Review*:

"That absolute commencement of organic life upon the globe, which the reviewer says I cannot evade the admission of, I distinctly deny."
The affirmation of universal evolution is in itself the negation of an absolute commencement of anything. Considered in terms of evolution, every kind of being is conceived as a product of modification wrought by insensible productions upon a preexisting kind of being; and this holds as fully of the supposed 'commencement of organic life' as of all subsequent developments of organic life... That organic matter was not produced all at once, but was reached through steps, we are well warranted in believing by the experiences of chemists..."

Of course it should be understood that the Buddhist silence, as it a beginning and an end, concerns only the production of phenomena, not any particular existence of groups of phenomena. That of which no beginning or end can be predicated is simply the Eternal Becoming. And, like the older Indian philosophy from which it sprang, Buddhism teaches the alternation apparent in the disparation of universes. At certain prodigious periods of Time, the whole Cosmos of “one hundred thousand times ten millions of worlds” vanishes away, consumed by fire or otherwise destroyed, but only to be reformed again. These periods are called “World-Cycles,” and each World-Cycle is divided into four “Immensities,” but we need not here consider the details of the doctrine. It is
only the fundamental idea of an evolutorial rhythm had I really
appreciated. I need scarcely remind the reader that the alternation of
integration and reintegration of the cosmos is also a scientific
conception, and a commonly accepted article of evolutorial beliefs. I
may quote, however, for other reasons, the paragraph expressing Herbert
Spencer's views upon the subject:

"Apparently, the universally-
existent forces of attraction
and repulsion, which, as we have
seen, necessitate rhythm in all
minor changes throughout the
universe, also necessitate rhythm
in the totality of changes—
produce now an immeasurable
period during which the attractive
forces, predominating, cause
universal concentration; and
then an immeasurable period
during which the repulsive
forces, predominating, cause

diffusion, — alternative ways of
Evolution and Dissolution. And
Thus there is suggested to us the
conception of a past during which
there have been successive
Evolution analogous to that which
is now going on; and a future
during which successive others
such Evolution may go on—
ever the same in principle,
but never the same in
concrete result." — (First
Principles, § 183. *)

Further on, Mr. Spencer has
pointed out the vast logical
consequence involved by this
hypothesis: —

[Note: The paragraph, from the fourth edition, has been considerably,
qualified in the definitive edition of 1900.]
- ring or end, or as being isolated. It becomes unified with all evidence before and after; and the force which the evidence presents falls into the same category with its Space and Time as admitting of no limitation in thought."

First Principles, § 190.

* Evidence and conclusion modified in the definitive edition of 1900; but, for present purposes of illustration, the text of the fourth edition has been preferred.
The foregoing Buddhist position sufficiently imply that the human conscious
ness is but a temporary aggregate—no
an eternal reality. There is no permanent
Dharma; there is but one eternal principle
in all life,—the supreme Buddha.
Modern Japanese call this Absolute
the "essence of mind." "The fire
fed by faggots," wrote one of them,
"dies when the faggots have been
consumed; but the essence of
fire is never destroyed.... All
things in the Universe are mind."
So stated the position is unscientific;
but as for the conclusion
reached, we may remember that
Mr. Wallace has stated almost
exactly the same thing, and that
there are not a few modern preachers
of the doctrine of a "universe
of mind and stuff." The hypothesis
is plausible. But the most
serious thinker will agree with the Buddhist assertion that the relation of all phenomena to the unknowable is merely that of wave to sea.

"Every feeling and thought being but transitory," says Mr. Spencer, "our entire life made up of such feelings and thoughts being but transitory, — may, the object exist with life is passed, though less transitory, being severally in course of losing their individualities quickly or slowly, — we learn that one thing permanent is the Unknown. Reality hidden under all these changing shapes."

Here the English and the Buddhist philosophers are in accord; but thereafter they suddenly part company. For Buddhism is not
agnosticism, but agnosticism, and professes to know the unknowable. The thinker of Mr. Spencer's school cannot make assumptions as to the nature of the sole Reality, nor as to the reason of its manifestations. He must confess to himself intellectually incapable of comprehending the nature of force, matter, or motion. He feels justified in accepting the hypothesis that all known elements have been evolved from one primordial undifferentiated substance, — the chemical evidence for this hypothesis being very strong. But he certainly would not call that primordial substance a substance of mind, nor attempt to explain the character of the forces that affected its integration.
Mr. Spencer would probably acknowledge that we know of matter only as an aggregate of forces, and of forces only as force-centres, or kinds of force, he would not declare that an alone is a kind of force, and nothing else... But we find even many of the German School taking a position very similar to the Buddhist position,—which implies a universal tendency, or, more strictly speaking, a universal potential tendency. Haeckel and other German monists assume such a condition for all substance. They are not agnostics, therefore, true agnostics; and their agnosticism very much resembles that of the higher Buddhism.
According to Buddhism there is no reality save Buddha: all 
things else are but karma. There is but one Life, one Self: human 
individuality and personality are but phenomenal conditions of that 
Self. Matter is karma; Mind is Karma — that is to say, mind 
as we know it; karma, as 
visibility, represents its mass 
and quality. Karma, as mentality, 
signifies character and tendency.

The primordial substance — cor-
responding to the "prodyle" of 
one Monier — is composed of 
the Five Elements, which are 
 mystically identified with five 
 Buddhas, all of whom are really 
but different modes of the One. 
With this idea of a primordial 
substance there is necessarily asso-
cated the idea of a universal sen-
dience. Matter is alive.

Now is the German monist
also matter is alive. On the
phenomenon of cell-physiology,
Haeckel claims to base his con-

viction that "even the adnorm is
not without a rudimentary form
of sensation and will—or, as it
is better expressed, of feeling
(æsthesia), and of inclination (tropesis),
— I mean—do say, a universal soul
of the simplest kind." I may
still also from Haeckel's "Riddle
of the Universe" the following
paragraph expressing the monistic
notion of substance as held by
Vogt and others:
"The two fundamental forms of substance, ponderable matter and ether, are not dead and only moved by extrinsic forces, but they are endowed with sensation and will (though, naturally, of the lowest grade); they experience an inclination for one sensation, a dislike of another; they strive after the one, and struggle against the other."

Less like a revival of the dreams of the Alchemists is the very probable hypothesis of Schneider, that tendency begins with the formation of certain combinations, that feeling is evolved from the non-feeling just as organic being has been evolved from inorganic. 
substance. But all these monistic ideas underlie the surprising conclusion that the Buddha teaching about matter as the law of karma, and for that reason they are well worthy of study in this relation. To Buddhist conception also matter is sentient, though sentience varying according to condition: "even rocks and stones," a Japanese Buddhist legend declares, "can worship Buddha." In the German monism of Professor Haeckel's school, the particular qualities and affinities of the atom represent feeling and inclination, "a soul of the simplest kind;" in Buddhism these qualities are made by karma, - and if I say, they represent tendencies formed in previous states of existence. The hypotheses appear to be very similar. But there is one immense, all-important difference,
between the Occidental and the Oriental
monism. The former would attrib-
ute the qualities of the atom
merely to a sort of heredity, — the persistence of its tendencies devel-
oped under chance influences operat-
ing throughout an immeasurable
past. The latter declares the
history of the atom to be purely
moral! All matter, according
Buddhism, represents aggregated
tendencies, making, by its inherent
inclinations, toward conditions
of pain or pleasure, evil or
good. “Pure actions,” writes
the author of “Outlines of the
Mahâyâna Philosophy,” “bring
forth the Pure Lands of all
the quarters of the universe;
while impure deeds produce the
Impure Lands.” That is, I say,
The matter is degraded by the force of moral
acid and goes to the making of blighted
worlds; and the matter formed by
the force of immoral act goes to the
making of miserable worlds. All
substance, like all mind, has its
karma; planets, like men, are
shaped by the creative power of act
and thought; and every atom goes
in opposite place, sooner or
dlater, according to the moral or
immoral quality of the tendencies
that inform it. Your good or bad
day at or deed will not only affect
your next rebirth, but will likewise
affect in some sort the nature of
your next unevolved, when, after
immemorable cycles, you may have
or live again. Of course, this
hurried idea has no counterpart
in modern evolutionary philosophy.
Mr. Spencer's position is well
known; but I must quote him for the purpose of emphasizing the contrast between Buddhist and scientific thought:—

"... We have no ethics of nebular condensation, or of sidereal movement, or of planetary motion; the concept of is not relevant to inorganic matter. Nor when we turn to organic beings, do we find that it has any relation to the phenomena of plant-lifestyle; though we ascribe to plants superiorities and inferiorities, leading to successes and failures in the struggle for existence, we do not associate with them praise or blame. 205 only with the rise of sentience in the animal world that the subject-matter of ethics originates." (Principles of Ethics, Vol. II § 326)
On the contrary, it will be seen, Buddhism actually teaches what we may call, to borrow Mr. Spencer's phrase, the 'ethics of nebular condensation'—though in Buddhist astronomy, the scientific meaning of the term 'nebular condensation' was never known. Of course the hypothesis is beyond the power of human intelligence to prove or disprove. But it is interesting for it proclaims a queer moral order of the cosmos, and attaches almost infinite consequence to the least of human acts. Had the old Buddhist metaphysicians been acquainted with the facts of modern chemistry, they might have applied their doctrine, with appalling success, to the interpretation of these facts. They might have explained the dance of atoms, the affinities of molecules, the vibrations of ether, in the most fascinating and terrifying way by their theory of karma.
... Here is a universe of suggestion, —
most weird suggestion — for anybody
able and willing to dare the experiment
of making a new religion, or at least
a new and tremendous system of
Alchemy, based upon the notion of
a moral order in the inorganic world!

But the metaphysics of
Karma in the higher Buddhism
includes much that is harder to
understand than any alchemical
by-products of atom-combinations.
As taught by popular Buddhism,
the doctrine of rebirth is simple
enough, — signifying no more than
transmigration; — you have lived
millions of lives in the past, and
you are likely to live again millions
of lives in the future, — all the
conditions of such rebirth depending
upon past conduct. The common notion is that, after a certain period of bodiless sojourn in this world, the spirit is guided somehow to the place of its next incarnation.

The people, of course, believe in souls. But there is nothing of this kind in the higher doctrine, which denies transmigration, denies the existence of the soul, denies personality.

There is no death to be reborn; there is no transmigration—and yet there is rebirth! There is no real "I" that suffers or is glad—and yet there is new suffering or new happiness! What we call the Deep, the personal consciousness, dissolves at the death of the body; but the karma, formed during life, then brings about the integration of a new
body and a new consciousness. You suffer in this existence because of acts done in a previous existence—yet the author of those acts was not identical with your present self! Are you, then, responsible for the faults of another person?

The Buddhist metaphysician would answer thus: "The frame of your question is wrong, because it assumes the existence of personality, and there is no personality. There is really no such individual as the 'you' of the inquiry. The suffering is indeed the result of errors committed in some former existence or existences, but there is no responsibility for the acts of another person, since there is no personality. The 'I' that was and the 'I' that is represent a chain of transitory being aggregations momentarily created by acts and thoughts, and the pain belongs to the aggregate as condition resulting from reality."
All this sounds extremely obscure; to understand the real theory we must put away the notion of personality, which is a very difficult thing to do. Successive births do not mean transmigration in the common sense of that word, but only the self-propagation of karma; the perpetual multiplying of certain conditions by a kind of gregarious gemmation, as I may borrow a biological term. The Buddhist illustration, however, is that of flame communicated from one lamp to another: a hundred lamps may thus be lit from one flame, and the hundred flames will all be different, though the origin of all was the same. Within the hollow flame of each transitory life is enclosed a part of the old Reality; but this is not a soul that transmigrates. Nothing passes from birth to birth but karma, character or condition.
One will naturally ask how can such a doctrine exert any moral influence whatever? If the future being shaped by my karma is not in anywise identical with my present self,—if the future consciousness evolved by my karma is to be essentially another consciousness,—how can I force myself to feel any pain about the sufferings of that unborn person? Again your question is wrong, a Buddhist would answer: I understand the doctrine you must get rid of the notion of individuality, and choose, not of persons, but of successive states of feeling and consciousness, each of which buds out of the other,—a chain of existences interdependently united... I may attempt another illustration. Every individual, as we understand the term, is essentially changing. All the structures of the body are con-
r landly undergoing waste and repair; and the body that you have at this hour is not, as a substance, the same body that you had ten years ago. Physically you are not the same person: yet you suffer the same pains, and feel the same pleasures, and find your powers limited by the same conditions. Whatever disintegrations and reconstructions of tissue have taken place within you, you have the same physical and mental peculiarities that you had ten years ago. Doubtless the cells of your brain have been decomposed and reconstituted; yet you experience the same emotions, recall the same memories, and think the same thoughts. Everywhere the fresh substance has assumed the qualities and tendencys of the substance replaced. This
persuasion of condition is like Karma. The transmission of tendency remains though the aggregate is changed.

These few glimpses into the fantastic worlds of Buddhist metaphysics will suffice, I trust, to convince any intelligent reader that the hobby of Buddhism (to which belong the much discussed and little comprehended doctrine of Nirvana) could never have been the religion of millions, almost incapable of forming abstract ideas, — the religion of a population even yet in a comparatively early stage of religious evolution. It was never understood by the people at all, nor is it even taught to them today. It is a religion of metaphysicians, a religion of scholars, a religion so difficult to be understood,
even by persons of some philosophical training is it right to be oud-
-ten for a system of universal negation. Yet the reader should
now be able to perceive that, because
a man disbelieves in a personal God,
in an immortal soul, and in any
combination of personality after death,
it does not follow that we are
justified in declaring him an
unbelieving person, especially if he
happen to be an Oriental. The
Japanese scholar who believes in
the moral order of the universe,
the ethical responsibility of the
present to all the future, the
innumerable consequences of every
thought and deed, the ultimate
dispersal of evil, and the
power of attainment to conditions
of infinite memory and infinite
vision, cannot be termed either
an atheist or a materialist, except by bigotry and ignorance. Profound as may be the difference between his religion and our own, in respect of symbols and mode of thought, the moral conclusions reached in either case are no more,