



The life of P.T. Barnum,: Written by himself

P. T Barnum

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Buddhism, like Christianity, is split up into innumerable sects, distinguished mainly by peculiar superstitions or ceremonial rites; and these sects not unfrequently cling to their sectarian tenets as being the main and most indispensable features of their religion. The present book follows none of the sectarian doctrines, but takes an ideal position upon which all true Buddhists may stand as upon common ground. Thus the arrangement into harmonious and systematic form of this Gospel of Buddha, as a whole, is the main original feature of the book. Considering the bulk of its various details, however, it must be regarded as a mere compilation, and the aim of the compiler has been to treat his material about in the same way as he thinks that the author of the Fourth Gospel of theN ew Testament used the accounts of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. He has ventured to present the data of Buddha slife in the light of their religio-philosophical importance; he has cut out most of their apocryphal adornments, especially those in which theN orthern traditions abound, yet he did not deem it wise to shrink from preserving the marvellous that appears in the old records, whenever its moral seemed to justify its mention; he only pruned the exuberance of wonder which delights in relating the most incredible things, apparently put on to impress, while in fact they can only tire. Miracles have ceased to be a religious test; yet the belief in the miraculous powers of theM aster still bears witness to the holy awe of the first disciples and reflects their religious enthusiasm. Lest the fundamental idea of Buddha sdoctrines be misunderstood, the reader is warned to take the term self in the sense in which Buddha uses it. The self of man can be and has been understood in a sense to which Buddha would never have made any objection. Buddha denies the existence of self as it was commo

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