

Gautama and Jesus parallel lives

Addendum research notes to
Compassion the Spirit of Truth (2009), ch. 6, § “Jesus was a martyred Adept, not an Avatara,” pp. 199-207.
Further reading: “Jesus Ben Pandira, the historical Christ” in the same Series.

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Apollonius accused of confining his teachings to the rich | 2 |
| Apollonius was a Nirmanakaya | 2 |
| Bible is not the Word of God | 2 |
| Blavatsky believed that Shankaracharya was an Avatara | 2 |
| Buddha beatified by the Romish Church | 3 |
| Buddha’s rebirths and migrations | 3 |
| Clergy demand unquestioning, blind faith | 3 |
| Every revealer of truth has to become “man of sorrow” and martyr | 3 |
| Jesus and Apollonius were thought to be kings | 4 |
| Jesus Chrēstos, a virtuous man in his trial of life, was reborn Christos, a Nirmanakaya | 4 |
| Jesus suffered much less than Gautama | 4 |
| Gautama and Jesus did not tolerate priestcraft | 4 |
| Gautama and Jesus parallel lives | 5 |
| Gautama’s reincarnations and the Apollonius connection | 5 |
| God’s “little children” were Great Initiates | 7 |
| Saving mankind from the insanities of materialism and pessimism | 8 |
| The legendary parts of the lives of Buddha and Jesus are identical | 8 |
| The “marriage” at Cana explained | 9 |
| The trials of the Sun-Initiate unravelled | 9 |
| Was Shankaracharya Gautama Buddha? | 10 |



Apollonius accused of confining his teachings to the rich

All that history knows is that Apollonius was the enthusiastic founder of a new school of contemplation. Perhaps less metaphorical and more practical than Jesus, he nevertheless inculcated the same quintessence of spirituality, the same high moral truths. He is accused of having confined them to the higher classes of society instead of doing what Buddha and Jesus did, instead of preaching them to the poor and the afflicted. Of his reasons for acting in such an exclusive way it is impossible to judge at so late a date. But Karmic law seems to be mixed up with it. Born, as we are told, among the aristocracy, it is very likely that he desired to finish the work undone in this particular direction by his predecessor, and sought to offer “peace on earth and good will” to *all* men, and not alone to the outcast and the criminal. Therefore he associated with the kings and mighty ones of the age. Nevertheless, the three “miracle-workers” exhibited striking similarity of purpose. Like Jesus and like Buddha, Apollonius was the uncompromising enemy of all outward show of piety, all display of useless religious ceremonies, bigotry and hypocrisy.¹

Apollonius was a Nirmanakaya

Porphyry asserts that Apollonius of Tyana was thus united four times to his deity — a statement which we believe to be a mistake, since Apollonius was a Nirmanakaya (divine incarnation — not Avatara) — and he (Porphyry) only once, when over sixty years of age. Theophany (or the actual appearance of a God to man), Theopathy (or “assimilation of divine nature”), and Theopneusty (inspiration, or rather the mysterious power to hear orally the teachings of a God) have never been rightly understood.²

Bible is not the Word of God

Hence, the Bible is *not* the “Word of God,” but contains at best the words of fallible men and *imperfect* teachers. Yet read *esoterically*, it does contain, if not the *whole* truth, still, “*nothing but the truth*,” under whatever allegorical garb. Only: *Quot homines tot sententiae*.³

Blavatsky believed that Shankaracharya was an Avatara

Shankaracharya was reputed to be an Avatara, an assertion the writer implicitly believes in, but which other people are, of course, at liberty to reject. And as such he took the body of a southern Indian, newly-born Brahman baby; that body, for reasons as important as they are mysterious to us, is said to have been animated by Gautama’s astral personal remains. This divine Non-Ego chose as its own Upadhi (physical basis), the ethereal, human Ego of a great Sage in this world of forms, as the fittest vehicle for Spirit to descend into.

[Continued overleaf.]

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (APOLLONIUS OF TYANA) XIV p. 130

² *Ibid.* (SOME REASONS FOR SECRECY) XIV p. 49 fn. [based on *New Platonism and Alchemy*, p. 13.]

³ *Ibid.* (THE ESOTERIC CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS – II) VIII p. 176; [quoting Terrence: *Phormio* ii, 3, 14; *i.e.*, so many men, so many opinions. It continues as *suus cuique mos*, *i.e.*, everyone has his own fancy.]



Said Shankaracharya:

Parabrahman is Karta [Purusha], as there is no other Adhishtatha,⁴ and Parabrahman is Prakriti, there being no other substance.^{5, 6}

Buddha beatified by the Romish Church

So true is it, that even the early Roman Catholic saint-makers, with a flippant unconcern for detection by posterity characteristic of the early periods of Christianity, claimed him as one of their converts, and, under the pseudonym of St. Josaphat, registered him in their *Golden Legend* and *Martyrology* as an orthodox, beatified Catholic saint. At this very day, there stands at Palermo, a church dedicated to Buddha under the name of Divo Josaphat.⁷

Buddha's rebirths and migrations

The Buddhist *Jatakas* (re-births and migrations of our Lord Shakya-Muni) with a philosophical essay upon the transmigrations of the 387,000 Buddhas who “turned the wheel of faith,” during the successive revelations to the world of the 125,000 other Buddhas, the Saints who can “overlook and unravel the thousandfold knotted threads of the moral chain of causation,” throwing in a treatise upon the *Nidanas*, the chain of twelve causes with a complete list of their two millions of results, and copious appendices by some Arahats, “who have attained the stream which floats into Nirvana.”⁸

Clergy demand unquestioning, blind faith

[Clergy] demand blind, implicit faith, and *forbid inquiry as the one unpardonable sin*, though nothing of that which leads to the knowledge of the truth can be aught else than holy. For what is “Divine Wisdom,” or *Gnosis*, but the essential reality behind the evanescent appearances of objects in nature — the very soul of the manifested LOGOS? Why should men who strive to accomplish union with the one eternal and absolute Deity shudder at the idea of prying into its mysteries — however awful?⁹

Every revealer of truth has to become “man of sorrow” and martyr

From Prometheus to Jesus, and from Him to the highest Adept as to the lowest disciple, every revealer of mysteries has had to become a Chrestos, a “man of sorrow” and a martyr.¹⁰

⁴ Adhishtatha, the active or working agent in Prakriti (or matter).

⁵ *Vedanta-Sutras*, Ad. I, Pada iv, shloka 23, *Commentary*. The passage is given as follows in Thibaut's translation (*Sacred Books of the East*, xxxiv), p. 286: “The Self is thus the operative cause, because there is no other ruling principle, and the material cause because there is no other substance from which the world could originate.”

⁶ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE MYSTERY OF BUDDHA) XIV p. 393

⁷ *Ibid.* (“THE LIGHT OF ASIA”) II pp. 133-34; [see *fn.* for details of this external transformation of Buddha.]

⁸ *Ibid.* (THE UNIVERSE IN A NUTSHELL) III pp. 427-28; [succinct reply to a question on the transmigration of soul.]

⁹ *Ibid.* (THE ESOTERIC CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS – II) VIII p. 177

¹⁰ *Ibid.* (THE BOOK OF ENOCH, ORIGIN AND FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIANITY) XIV p. 84



Jesus and Apollonius were thought to be kings

Jesus and Apollonius were healers, and were both addressed as Kings by their followers. Had they failed to raise those who were to all intents and purposes the dead, none of their names would have passed down to posterity; for this was the first and crucial test, the certain sign that the Adept had upon Him the invisible hand of a primordial divine Master, or was an incarnation of one of the “Gods.”¹¹

Jesus Chrēstos, a virtuous man in his trial of life, was reborn Christos, a Nirmanakaya

But in that condition known as the Nirmanakaya [the Nirvani “with remains,”] he can still help humanity.

“Let me suffer and bear the sins of all [be reincarnated unto new misery] but let the world be saved!” was said by Gautama BUDDHA: an exclamation the real meaning of which is little understood now by his followers. “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?”¹² asks the astral Jesus of Peter. “Till I come” means “till I am reincarnated again” in a physical body. Yet the Christ of the old crucified body could truly say: “I am with my Father and one with Him,” which did not prevent the astral from taking a form again nor John from tarrying indeed till his Master had come; nor hinder John from failing to recognize him when he did come, or from then opposing him.¹³

Jesus suffered much less than Gautama

What are three years of sermons and of living in the open, ended by a few hours of suffering on the cross, compared with the eighty years of *moral* torture of Gautama the Buddha, before which all the tortures of the flesh fade into insignificance!¹⁴

Gautama and Jesus did not tolerate priestcraft

Further, the lecturer remarked, that “Gautama never tolerated priestcraft.” Nor has Jesus, and I maintain it; His denunciations of sacerdotalism and the Rabbis who teach the Law of Moses and lay heavy burdens on men’s shoulders which “they *themselves* will not move with one of their fingers,” (*Matt.*, xxiii, 4); His prohibition to make a parade of prayers in synagogues and command to enter into one’s closet to pray (*Matt.*, v, 27-28); as also the absence of any injunction from him to establish a *dogmatic* church — prove it. Therefore Sir M. Williams’ accusation that Buddha’s “followers in other countries became entangled in a network of sacerdotalism more enslaving than that from which he had rescued them,” applies to Christianity with far greater force than to Buddhism.¹⁵

¹¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE ORIGIN OF THE MYSTERIES) XIV p. 253

¹² *John* xxi, 22

¹³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE DOCTRINE OF AVATARAS) XIV p. 384; [*cf.* “Jesus Ben Pandira, the historical Christ” in the same Series.]

¹⁴ *Ibid.* (REPLY TO THE MISTAKEN CONCEPTIONS OF ABBÉ ROCA) IX p. 230

¹⁵ *Ibid.* (CHRISTIAN LECTURES ON BUDDHISM) IX p. 149; [quoting Sir Monier Monier-Williams.]



Gautama and Jesus parallel lives

Students of Esoteric Philosophy see in the Nazarene Sage a Bodhisattva with the spirit of Buddha Himself in Him.¹⁶

There are many other strange points of similarity between Gautama and Jesus, which cannot be noticed here.¹⁷

Look up *Isis Unveiled*, II pp. 132ff, 338ff; *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, IX p. 149; *ibid.* X p. 67 (see “The legendary lives of Buddha and Jesus are identical” below); *ibid.* XIV p. 395ff;

Gautama’s reincarnations and the Apollonius connection

As will be found mentioned later, the Tibetan Lamaseries contain many secret and semi-secret volumes, detailing the lives of great Sages. Many of the statements in them are purposely confused, and in others the reader becomes bewildered, unless a clue be given him, by the use of one name to cover many individuals who follow the same line of teaching. Thus there is a succession of “living Buddhas,” and the name Buddha is given to teacher after teacher. Emil Schlagintweit writes:

Thus, to each human Buddha belongs a Dhyani-Buddha, and a Dhyani-Bodhisattva, and the unlimited number of the former also involves an equally unlimited number of the latter.¹⁸

It is stated that at the age of thirty-three, Shankaracharya, tired of his mortal body, “put it off” in the cave he had entered, and that the Bodhisattva, that served as his lower personality, was freed

With the burden of a sin upon him which he had not committed.

At the same time it is added:

At whatever age one puts off his outward body by free will, at that age will he be made to die a violent death against his will in his next rebirth.

Now, Karma could have no hold on “Maha Shankara” (as Shankara is called in the secret work), as he had, as Avatara, no Ego of his own, but a Bodhisattva — a willing sacrificial victim. Neither had the latter any responsibility for the deed, whether sinful or otherwise. Therefore we do not see the point, since Karma cannot act unjustly. There is some terrible mystery involved in all this story, one that no uninitiated intellect can ever unravel. Still, there it is, suggesting the natural query, “Who, then, was punished by Karma?” and leaving it to be answered.

A few centuries later Buddha tried one more incarnation, it is said, in * * * , and again, fifty years subsequent to the death of this Adept, in one whose name is given as Tiani-Tsang.¹⁹ No details, no further information or explanation is given. It is simply stated that the last Buddha had to work out the remains of his Karma, which

¹⁶ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE MYSTERY OF BUDDHA) XIV p. 396 fn.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* XIV p. 395 & fn.

¹⁸ *Buddhism in Tibet*. . . p. 52, [London, Susil Gupta, 1968.] This same generic use of a name is found among Hindus with that of Shankaracharya, to take but one instance. All His successors bear his name, but are not reincarnations of Him. So with the “Buddhas.”

¹⁹ King Suddhodana.



none of the Gods themselves can escape, forced as he was to bury still deeper certain mysteries half revealed by him — hence misinterpreted. The words used would stand when translated:

Born fifty-two years too early as Shramana Gautama, the son of King Zastang; then retiring fifty-seven years too soon as Maha Shankara, who got tired of his outward form. This wilful act aroused and attracted King Karma, who killed the new form of * * * ²⁰ at thirty-three,²¹ the age of the body that was put off. [At whatever age one puts off his outward body by free will, at that age will he be made to die in his next incarnation *against his will* — Commentary.] He died in his next (body) at thirty-two and a little over, and again in his next at eighty — a Maya, and at one hundred, in reality. The Bodhisattva chose Tiani-Tsang,²² then again the Sugata became Tsong-kha-pa, who became thus Dezhin-Shegpa [Tathagata — “one who follows in the way and manner of his predecessors”]. The Blessed One could do good to his generation as * * * but none to posterity, and so as Tiani-Tsang he became incarnated only for the “remains” [of his precedent Karma, as we understand it]. The Seven Ways and the Four Truths were once more hidden out of sight. The Merciful One confined since then his attention and fatherly care to the heart of Bodyul, the nursery grounds of the seeds of truth. The blessed “remains” since then have overshadowed and rested in many a holy body of human Bodhisattvas.

No further information is given, least of all are there any details or explanations to be found in the secret volume. All is darkness and mystery in it, for it is evidently written but for those who are already instructed. Several flaming red asterisks are placed instead of names, and the few facts given are abruptly broken off. The key of the riddle is left to the intuition of the disciple, unless the “direct followers” of Gautama the Buddha — “those who are to be denied by His Church for the next cycle” — and of Shankaracharya, are pleased to add more.²³

²⁰ There are several names marked simply by asterisks.

²¹ Shankaracharya died also at thirty-two years of age, or rather disappeared from the sight of his disciples, as the legend goes.

²² Does “Tiani-Tsang” stand for Apollonius of Tyana? This is a simple surmise. Some things in the life of that Adept would seem to tally with the hypothesis — others to go against it.

²³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (“REINCARNATIONS” OF BUDDHA) XIV pp. 403-5



God's "little children" were Great Initiates

αμην λεγω υμιν ος εαν μη δεξηται την βασιλειαν του θεου ως παιδιον ου μη εισελθη εις αυτην.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

— *Mark x, 15* [KJV]

As in the Chaldean Cosmogony of Berossus and the Stanzas just given, some treatises on the Kabala speak of creatures with two faces, some with four, and some with one face: for "the highest Adam did not come down in all the countries, or produce progeny and have many wives," but is a Mystery.

So is the Dragon a mystery. Truly, says Rabbi Simeon Ben-Yohai, that to understand the meaning of the Dragon is not given to the "Companions" (students, or *chelas*), but only to "the little ones," *i.e.*, the *perfect Initiates*.²⁴ "The (account of the) work of the beginning, the companions study and understand it; but the little ones (the perfect initiates) are those who understand the allusion to the work of the beginning, by the *mystery of the serpent of the Great Sea*."²⁵ And those Christians, who may happen to read this, will also understand by the light of the above sentence who their "Christ" was. For Jesus states repeatedly that he who "shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a *little child*, he shall not enter therein"; and if some of his sayings have been meant to apply to children without any metaphor, most of what relates to the "little ones" in the Gospels, related to the *Initiates, of whom Jesus was one*. Paul (Saul) is referred to in the Talmud as "the little one."²⁶



²⁴ Such was the name given in ancient Judea to the Initiates, called also the "Innocents" and the "Infants," *i.e.*, once more reborn. This *key* opens a vista into one of the New Testament mysteries; the slaughter by Herod of the 40,000 "Innocents." There is a legend to this effect, and the event which took place almost a century B.C., shows the origin of the tradition blended at the same time with that of Krishna and his uncle Kamsa. In the case of the N.T., Herod stands for Alexander Jannaeus (of Lyda), whose persecution and murder of hundreds and thousands of Initiates led to the adoption of the Bible story.

²⁵ *Zohar*, II, 34b

²⁶ *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 504



Saving mankind from the insanities of materialism and pessimism

Τους ειπε τοτε ο Ιησους: «ειπεν ουν αυτοις ο ιησους αμην αμην λε-
γω υμιν εαν μη φαγητε την σαρκα του υιου του ανθρωπου και πιη-
τε αυτου το αιμα ουκ εχετε ζωην εν εαυτοις.»

Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,
you have no life in you. [NIV]

— *John vi, 53*

The mystic meaning of the injunction, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except *ye eat the flesh* of the Son of man and *drink his blood*, ye have not life in yourselves,” can never be understood or appreciated at its true *occult* value, except by those who hold some of the *seven keys*, and yet care little for St. Peter.²⁷ These words, whether said by Jesus of Nazareth, or Jeshua Ben-Panthera, are the words of an INITIATE. They have to be interpreted with the help of *three keys* — one opening the *psychic* door, the second that of physiology, and the third that which unlocks the mystery of terrestrial being, by unveiling the inseparable blending of theogony with anthropology. It is for revealing a few of these truths, with the *sole view of saving intellectual mankind from the insanities of materialism and pessimism*, that mystics have often been denounced as the servants of Antichrist, even by those Christians who are most worthy, sincerely pious and respectable men.²⁸

The legendary parts of the lives of Buddha and Jesus are identical

The Essenes, the Therapeuts and the Gnostics are identified as a result of this fusion of Indian and Semitic thought, and it is shown that, on comparing the lives of Jesus and Buddha, both biographies fall into two parts: the ideal legend and the real facts. Of these the legendary part is identical in both; as indeed must be the case from the theosophical standpoint, since both are based on the Initiatory cycle. Finally this “legendary” part is contrasted with the corresponding feature in other religions, notably with the Vedic story of Vishvakarman. According to his view, it was only at the council of Nicea that Christianity broke officially with the ecclesiastical Buddhism, though he regards the Nicene Creed as simply the development of the formula: “the Buddha, the Law, the Church” (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha).²⁹

²⁷ The existence of these *seven keys* is virtually admitted, owing to deep research in the Egyptological lore, by Mr. G. Massey again. While opposing the teachings of *Esoteric Buddhism* — unfortunately misunderstood by him in almost every respect — in his Lecture on “The Seven Souls of Man and their Culmination in Christ,” he writes (p. 21): —

“ . . . this system of thought, this mode of representation, this septenary of powers, in various aspects, had been established in Egypt at least seven thousand years ago, as we learn from certain allusions to Atum [the god ‘in whom the fatherhood was individualised as the *begetter of an eternal soul*,’ the *seventh* principle of the Theosophists] found in the inscriptions lately discovered at Sakkarah. I say in various aspects *because the Gnosis of the Mysteries was at least sevenfold in its nature* — it was Elemental, Biological, Elementary (human), Stellar, Lunar, Solar, and Spiritual — and *nothing short of a grasp of the whole system can possibly enable us to discriminate the various parts, distinguish one from the other, and determine the which and the what, as we try to follow the symbolical Seven through their several phases of character.*”

²⁸ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE ESOTERIC CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS) VIII pp. 181-2

²⁹ *Ibid.* (THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY: ITS MISSION AND ITS FUTURE) X p. 67; [referring to the views of French Orientalist Émile Burnouf.]



The “marriage” at Cana explained

In all the Mysteries, after the *four days*³⁰ of trial or temptation, came the *three days* of descent into Hades, or the tomb, from which the Glorified Candidate, or Initiate, arose.

“On the third day,” therefore, means that the time for the final Initiation had come, when Jesus, or the Neophyte, would become Christ, or the Initiate; that is, at one with Buddhi or the Christ-principle.

“There was a marriage in Cana” — that is to say, that the Disciple was joined to his Higher Self, the marriage of the Adept with Sophia, Divine Wisdom, or the Marriage of the Lamb, in Cana.³¹

The trials of the Sun-Initiate unravelled

In the mystical representations of his character, Vishvakarman is often called Vithoba, and is pictured as the “Victim,” the “Man-God,” or the Avatara crucified in space: [At this point the WMS. (pp. 207-9) reads as follows:

In the secret work upon the Mysteries and rites of initiation, in which very rough but correct points are given in the sacramental postures and trials to which the postulant was subjected — together with the test, the following details are found. (1) The neophyte representing the sun as Sahasra-Kirana — “he of the thousand rays” — is shown kneeling before the hierophant. The latter is in the act of cutting off *seven locks* of the neophyte’s long hair,³² and, in the following (2) illustration, the postulant’s bright crown of golden beams is thrown off and replaced by a wreath of sharp ligneous spines, symbolizing the loss.³³ This was enacted in India. In trans-Himalayan regions it was the same.

In order to become a “Perfect” one the sakridagamin (“he who will receive new birth,” lit.) had, among other trials to descend into patala, the “nether world,” after which process only he could hope to become an anagamin — “one who will be reborn no more.” The full initiate had the option of either entering this (second) Path by appearing at will in the world of men under a human form, or he could choose to first rest in the *World of Gods* (the Devachan of the initiate), and then only to be reborn on this our earth. Thus the next stage shows the postulant preparing for this journey — (3)

³⁰ (With reference to the 4 days mentioned above, it is interesting to note that Jesus is said to have been tempted for 40 days. Here the nought is a “blind,” for in mystery-numbers ciphers can be disregarded and changed according to the rules of the method employed. — H.P. Blavatsky)

³¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (NOTES ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN – IV) XI pp. 498-99. Cf. “The first eleven verses in the second chapter contain the allegorical representation of the last and final Initiation.” Commentary on *John ii, 1: And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there.* “The main point of the allegory is the turning of ‘Water’ (the Astral) into ‘Wine,’ or Matter into Spirit.” [See compilation “Blavatsky on Marriage, Divorce, and Celibacy” in our Blavatsky Speaks Series.]

³² See *Judges*, Ch. xvi, 19, where Samson, also a symbolic personification of the sun, as Hercules speaks of hair, which, if cut off, will deprive him of his strength, of “seven green withes,” etc.

³³ No need of explaining that Sanjna, pure spiritual *conscience* is the *inner* perception of the neophyte (or chela) and initiate; the scorching of it by the most ardent beams of the sun being symbolical of the terrestrial passions. Hence the *seven locks* symbolical of the seven cardinal sins. As to the seven cardinal virtues, in order to be regained by the sakridagamin (the candidate “for new birth”) they could be attained by him only through severe trials and suffering.



Every kind of temptation (we have no right to enumerate these or speak of them) was being placed in his way. If he came out victorious from these, then one more initiation was proceeded with; if he fell — *it was delayed*, and often entirely lost for him. These rules lasted *seven* days. During the first three, as said, he was tried and examined as to his proficiency in Occult learning. On the fourth day — (4) he was tied, extended full length, and with his arms stretched out on *a wooden lathe*, symbolical of purification, his impurities having to be smoothed off, like a piece of rough, unfashioned wood. After this he was left alone in a subterranean crypt, in utter darkness, for two days and two nights . . .]³⁴

Was Shankaracharya Gautama Buddha?

Was Shankaracharya Gautama the Buddha, then, under a new personal form? It may perhaps only puzzle the reader the more if he be told that there was the “astral” Gautama inside the outward Shankara, whose higher principle, or Atman, was, nevertheless, his own divine prototype — the “Son of Light,” indeed — the heavenly, mind-born son of Aditi.

This fact is again based on that mysterious transference of the divine ex-personality merged in the impersonal Individuality — now in its full trinitarian form of the Monad as Atma-Buddhi-Manas — to a new body, whether visible or subjective. In the first case it is a Manushya-Buddha; in the second it is a Nirmanakaya. The Buddha is in Nirvana, it is said, though this once mortal vehicle — the subtle body — of Gautama is still present among the Initiates; nor will it leave the realm of conscious Being so long as suffering mankind needs its divine help — not to the end of this Root-Race, at any rate. From time to time He, the “astral” Gautama, associates Himself, in some most mysterious — to us quite incomprehensible — manner, with Avatars and great saints, and works through them. And several such are named.

Thus it is averred that Gautama Buddha was reincarnated in Shankaracharya — that, as is said in *Esoteric Buddhism*:

Shankaracharya simply *was* Buddha in all respects in a new body.³⁵

While the expression in its mystic sense is true, the way of putting it may be misleading until explained. Shankara was a Buddha, most assuredly, but he never was a reincarnation of the Buddha, though Gautama’s “Astral” Ego — or rather his Bodhisattva — may have been associated in some mysterious way with Shankaracharya. Yes, it was perhaps the Ego, Gautama, under a new and better adapted cascket — that of a Brahman of Southern India. But the Atman, the Higher Self that overshadowed both, was distinct from the Higher Self of the translated Buddha, which was now in Its own sphere in Kosmos.

Shankara was an Avatara in the full sense of the term. According to Sayanacharya, the great commentator on the *Vedas*, he is to be held as an Avatara, or direct incarnation of Shiva — the Logos, the Seventh Principle in Nature — Himself. In the Se-

³⁴ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE TRIAL OF THE SUN INITIATE) XIV p. 261-62

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 175, Fifth Edition, 1885



cret Doctrine Shri Shankaracharya is regarded as the abode — for the thirty-two years of his mortal life — of a Flame, the highest of the manifested Spiritual Beings, one of the Primordial Seven Rays.³⁶



Prince Siddhartha Gautama (Gandhara, 1st-2nd century) Musée Guimet, Paris

³⁶ *Blavatsky Collected Writings, (THE MYSTERY OF BUDDHA) XIV pp. 389-90*

