

whenever I think of it as a remembrance  
from my beloved mother.

A word in passing on the translation of the *makurakotoba*, or "pillow words," which appear so frequently in Japanese *waka*. Generally speaking, *makurakotoba* are not so much descriptive as they are evocative of some emotion associated with the noun to which they are prefixed. I doubt if satisfactory results can be obtained from attempting to reproduce them literally in translation—their impact is felt too strongly in the poem, causing a distraction away from the main thought or imagery of what is in any case a brief and delicate poetic statement. If they are to be translated at all, would it not be preferable to use some word or phrase to suggest the desired emotion or nuance, rather than to declare openly the literal meaning of the *makurakotoba*?

The book is finely produced, but marred by a number of misprints. To mention one, which might cause confusion: the romanization of the Japanese title of the text itself is given as *Honchū Sōzanshū*; it should be *Hyōchū Sōzanshū*.

SAKAMOTO HIROSHI

*THE MIRROR MIND: Spirituality and Transformation.* By William Johnston, S. J. Harper and Row, New York, 1981; pp. 192. ISBN 0-06-064197-5.

This is perhaps the author's best work to date among the volumes he has produced on the subject of Christian and Buddhist ascetical or spiritual practice. It consists of a series of lectures given at Oxford University in the fall of 1981. Father Johnston is one of the most competent theologians in the important task of accurately and sympathetically interpreting Buddhist belief and practice for the educated Christian believer. This primary purpose of his lectures is not simply to inform Christians about Buddhism in some detached, theoretical manner; rather, they attempt something a good deal more ambitious and a great deal more difficult. They present some of the major themes of traditional Catholic mystical and spiritual theology and attempt to elucidate the many ways in which these ancient Christian teachings on the practices and stages of human and spiritual growth have deep and important parallels in Mahayana Buddhism. Some of these presentations come off much better than others. Their cumulative effect, however, is to add a dimension of credibility to both Christian and Buddhist paths by shedding important, new light on their many common methods and insights

through which they point to the transcendent religious dimensions of man and his world.

Father Johnston exposes the common elements of such themes as "Emptiness," which the Spanish mystics called "*Nada*" or "Nothing" (p. 77); Love, which Buddhists call "Compassion" (p. 152 ff.); the Mirror Mind or No Mind, which Christians interpret as a "dying to the old man" (pp. 36-47); and the role of objectless meditation or Contemplation in the more advanced stages of the spiritual life (pp. 76-79), which in the Mahayana tradition are known as the Ten Bodhisattva Stages. These are a few of the themes treated in the course of eight lectures or chapters, which include among others such matters as interreligious dialogue, self-realization, body and breathing, words and silence, the holy books, and transformation of feeling.

As a charter member of the annual Zen-Christian dialogue meetings and after long years of integrating zazen and other Buddhist disciplines into his own Christian practice, Johnston is too experienced to make hasty claims about the nature and depth of the many parallels he treats. He simply extrapolates on them as he himself perceives them. He speaks as a Catholic priest and theologian to an audience he presumes to be in some degree familiar and sympathetic with the classical categories of pre-Reformation Christian ascetical and spiritual theology. He presents these teachings in a modern context as basically compatible with the best thinking in psychology, history, and world religions, all of which disciplines he shows himself to be reasonably competent in.

His treatments of Buddhist teachings and practices—they are mostly from Zen but include discussions of Mahayana and Pure Land traditions—are always careful, informed, and deeply respectful, without attempting to be profound or authoritative. Here one finds very little of the stereotyped comparisons by which both Christians and Buddhists have traditionally been wont to portray each other. Unquestionably Johnston not only deeply admires Buddhism; he is also convinced that Christians have much to learn from it as well.

These somewhat sanguine remarks on what is at best a popular introduction to a complex issue must be balanced by some clear reservations and criticism. In this writer's opinion at least, the work presumes too much sympathy with and understanding of Catholic mystical and ascetical theology to allow anyone other than the persistent non-Catholic an easy access to its riches. These failings compromise the effectiveness of the work as a bridge over which Buddhists and Christians can pass towards a deeper respect and understanding for one another.

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