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stresses that Christ was also critical of the theism of his day, and then remarks: "To speak in such negative terms alone does not squarely face the problem at hand. The difference between the Christians' belief in God and the Buddhists' silence on God cannot be dismissed so lightly." (p. 188)

Indeed, the beautiful irenic attitude of the author may strengthen us both in the convictions we have in common but does not really permit us to learn from one another or be transformed by one another. This latter benefit can only be had by facing the real differences squarely and together—in a common attitude of seekers of the Way. But let me finally admit that I am doing Fernando an injustice. After all, he did not write for theologians or participants in the dialogue on the academic level. He wrote his book for the "Christian in the street" for whom the reading of this book may mean an invaluable widening of mind and heart.

Note (1) *In Ching Feng*, Vol. XXV nr. 3 (1982), pp. 186–189.

JAN VAN BRAGT

*WAS IST DER WEG—er liegt vor deinen Augen, Zen-Meditation in japanischen Gaerten* ("What is the Way? It is right in Front of you—Zen Meditation in Japanese Gardens") by Rudolf Seitz, with contributions by Kim Lan Thai and Masao Yamamoto (Koesel-Verlag, Munich 1985), pp. 176, including 72 monochrome plates.

Jōei Matsukura, abbot of the world-famous Ryōanji Temple in Kyoto, once answered the question as to "What is Zen?" in the following words: "Zen is a religion without a personal God . . . without an idol to worship; Zen is a religion of self-cultivation . . . by which man deepens his self-awareness . . . through which man intuits his own nature, that is to say, a religion of Satori-enlightenment. Zen is a religion of 'Nothingness', 'Selflessness' . . . , a living religion of work and action . . . by which man realizes that 'the place where he stands is at once the Pure Land' . . ." Everybody who has undergone some Zen training knows of the weight given to physical work to be performed in the true spirit of Zen (*samu*). Such work being part and parcel of Zen training, is mainly directed towards the maintenance of monastic buildings or temples and the gardens surrounding them. The art of laying out, shaping and finally maintaining gardens and, of course, the gardens themselves cultivated in Japan for many centuries, their symbolism and aestheticism are so closely and predominantly related with Buddhism—especially Zen Buddhism—that it ap-

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pears justified to speak of a Zen art as one of the multi-faceted aspects of Zen Buddhist culture.

The literature in western languages specifically dealing with Japanese gardens does not seem abundant but includes very fine contributions among which, first of all, must be mentioned Teiji Itoh's *Space and Illusion in the Japanese Garden* (New York and Tokyo/Kyoto 1973) being a translation and adaptation of the Japanese original entitled *Shakkei to Tsuboniwa* (Kyoto 1965). Another more recent work on the same subject is Mark Holborn's *The Ocean in the Sand; Japan: from Landscape to Garden* (Boulder 1978). We are fortunate to have the present publication in German treating of "Japanese gardens as works of art", of "form modelled by means of nature". *Was ist der Weg* is the result of a happy collaboration between three artists-cum-scholars: Rudolf Seitz, President of the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich; Kim Lan Thai, Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy, University of Munich; and Yamamoto Masao, Professor and President of the Academy of Fine Arts in Tokyo, who specializes in eastern and western aesthetics. Kim Lan Thai, like Yamamoto, is admirably qualified to mediate and promote mutual understanding and appreciation in respect of oriental and occidental ways of feeling and thinking, for she is equally well read in both Buddhist and Western philosophy.

What immediately captivates one in the book under review are the magnificent photos taken by R. Seitz, through which he tries to make visible the fascination which those "places of meditation" evoke. The photos are arranged under eight headings: paths, stones, sand, trees and blossoms, stone-lanterns and gates, walls and pavilions, bridges, water and reflection. With each plate goes a quotation chiefly from Zen literature, selected by K. L. Thai. These quotations, she states, are not meant to be captions, for such would fix contemplation in finitude. Words and pictures are 'skill in means' pointing to the Ineffable and inspiring one actually to tread the path leading to insight-knowledge and realization of Absolute Truth.

The textual part proper of the present work constitutes the introductory portion, to begin with, R. Seitz' foreword on the fascination of Japanese gardens. Seitz concludes by citing Yamamoto: "He who contemplates the gardens, is in the Buddha's best of hands."

Yamamoto's essay entitled "As a European in Japanese Gardens" makes very interesting reading as in it he discusses the origins and development of Japanese horticulture. Before doing so, he refers to the difficulties westerners are likely to have in appreciating the beauty of traditional Japanese gardens. Thanks to Seitz' photographs, he says, in this book at least such difficulties are overcome; for these photos documenting the "meeting of a European artist and art professor with traditional Japanese gardens", bespeak the artist's

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“keen aesthetic eye and depth of humane feeling” as well as his “living *Kunstanschauung* based on the great tradition of classical German aesthetics.” Yamamoto also gives reasons for the above-mentioned difficulties. An archaeological discovery unearthed in Japan and known as the Shumisen Stone indicates one of the origins of Japanese horticulture. Shumisen derives from Sanskrit Sumeru, the fabulous mountain in the centre of the world taken by Buddhists for a cosmocentric symbol; in this context man is not thought the ‘pearl of creation’ to such an extent that he considers nature an essentially hostile world outside himself and to be subjugated as much as possible. The Omphalos Stone in the Museum of Delphi very much resembles the Shumisen Stone; culturally speaking, however, the former is an anthropocentric symbol reflecting the ancient Greeks’ belief in their being in the centre—‘at the navel’—of the world. “The Greeks created the ideal image of the human body as the most outstanding creation of nature.” The Japanese, on the other hand, inspired by Chinese and Korean culture, “sought to realize the ideal image as the most outstanding creation of nature in their horticulture.”

K. L. Thai’s further contribution to *Was ist der Weg* bears the title “The Clap of One Hand” borrowed from Hakuin Zenji’s koan. It is particularly she who associates R. Seitz’ photos with Zen Buddhism by referring to and quoting from Zen classics of Indian, Chinese and Japanese origin. She also explains why monochrome plates have been chosen for this book. Black and white photos are apt to come very close to the Far Eastern art of “non-colour in which colourlessness is not held to be a negation of colours but the perfection of the chromatic spectrum.” Monochromy is intended to “reduce the inexhaustible manifoldness of natural colours to their simplest expression.” Monochromy goes hand in hand with the principles underlying Chinese brush and ink works in which rather the absence of brush and ink is the subtle criterion of the “divine quality of painting.” This art of non-expression, along with that of monochromy, reminds one of the koan, The sound of one hand clapping: “The sound produced by clapping with one hand is a paradox removing things and simultaneously reviving them in their originality.” Although K. L. Thai has intentionally refrained from referring directly to what the photos show, many striking examples of the art of non-expression could be given as found in the photographs of sand or white gravel gardens among which the Ryoanji Rock-and-Gravel Garden is the best known.

The number of printing errors is negligible. Misprints actually needing correction occur in the Sanskrit quotation from the *Vajracchedikā Sūtra* (p. 9, 25-26): for *aprasthitam . . . utpādayitavyam . . . prasthitam* read *apratisthitam . . . utpādayitavyam . . . pratisthitam*.

Many thanks are due to the three authors of the present book who have

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offered an enlightening contribution to the subject in hand. The reviewer may finally be permitted to express a wish and a hope. Due to the fact that K. L. Thai, dealing with Zen Buddhism, hails from Vietnam and that Vietnam has its own Zen culture and history which even antedates that of Japan by roughly speaking 600 years—for western students of Buddhism quite a surprise—one feels prompted to request and wish in earnest that she and other qualified Vietnamese scholars, authors and poets try their best and eventually succeed in making accessible to the scholarly world and the interested general public the grandeur of the indigenous Zen tradition of Vietnam; for what is known of it outside Vietnam is next to nothing.

BHIKKHU PASADIKA

*THE NOTHINGNESS BEYOND GOD: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nishida Kitarō.* By Robert E. Carter. Paragon House, 1989. xxvii + 191 pp., with a bibliography and index. ISBN 1-55778-072-2

More than twenty years have passed since Nishida Kitarō's maiden work was translated into English by V. H. Viglielmo under the title *A Study of Good*. Since then, Western scholars in increasing numbers have been turning their attention to Nishida's philosophy, as well as to the thought of other thinkers of the so-called Kyoto School centered at Kyoto University. There have appeared recently in the West two books which try to come to grips with the studies in this field. One of them is *Absolutes Nichts*, published by Hans Waldenfels in 1976. The other is *The Nothingness beyond God* by R. E. Carter. I should like to offer some comments on the latter.

*The Nothingness beyond God* consists of six chapters, devoted to the topics of "pure experience," the logic of *basho*," "self-contradictory identity," "God and Nothingness," "religion and morality," and "value, ethics, and feeling."

According to Professor Carter, Nishida, while firmly standing within Zen Buddhist tradition, endeavoured to give expression to his "passion for rendering Buddhist paradoxical utterance, or the Zen experience of immediacy understandable" by having recourse to or through the medium of the "several languages of Western philosophy" (xiii). Professor Carter rightly points out that, even though there is no doubt that Nishida's philosophy favors a Zen-oriented perspective, he is "a bridge between East and West precisely because he identifies himself with neither alleged perspective and sees more often than most that the work of philosophy is neither Eastern nor Western, but takes as