

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

trial itself,

I had done all required of me, but I had never actually appeared in court. This was partly because so many others were longing for the chance to be seen on television by "the old folks at home," and partly because I did not want to emphasize to my Japanese friends that I was after all in Japan to prosecute a group of Japanese.

His own inner development during this period he describes as a process of extension/expansion, a steady lift of consciousness to the plane of a higher self; sometimes, as in midsummer in Japan, with a sense of sustained operation at that level. The extension was, as one must use analogy, up to the self, out to mankind and all other forms of life, and inwards to the centre.

The curious blend in Mr. Humphreys of Theosophy and Buddhism, which is seen not only in this autobiography but in his newly published manual for meditation (*The Search Within*, 1977) as well, appears to have its own historical background. We are reminded of Beatrice Suzuki, wife of the late D. T. Suzuki, who was also a Theosophist before she encountered her future husband. At a certain period of history, for a certain set of people, Theosophy seems to have played a remarkable role in introducing Westerners to the realms of Buddhist philosophy. What to our prejudiced (or ignorant) eyes appear to represent totally different thought streams, in him find harmonious expression. Whatever evaluation one might venture in this regard, his remarks do help clear up something that had long been a mystery to me.

We hope that Mr. Humphreys is able to continue on for many more years creating the material that will inspire him to a sequel, which will record for us his continuing "journey of the heart . . . to wider still becoming . . . and heights as yet unwon."

BANDŌ SHŌJUN

THE INNER EYE OF LOVE: Mysticism and Religion. By William Johnston. Collins: London, 1978, 199 pp.

This book aims at being thoroughly "ecumenical" in three areas: (1) religion, psychology, and science; (2) Buddhism and Christianity; and (3) mysticism and ordinary religion are to be harmoniously related to each other. At first I was inclined to spend my space in quarreling with its view that all vital religion

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is essentially "mystical"—a blurring of essential distinctions *I* would say; that the Bible is the *basis* of Christian mysticism—was so interpreted by Easternized mystics *I* would say; that unconscious (transic?) states are not mystical, but "nonsense" (p. 36). Nonsense, *I* would think.

But there are more important matters: to wit (1) the manner in which mysticism, modern psychology, and science are interrelated; and (2) the "harmonization" (my word) of Buddhist and Christian mystical-experiential essences.

In a quotation from the *Church Times* on the dust jacket it is asserted that those interested in the "scientific investigation" of meditation "will find much here." This reminds one, of course, of the author's concern for such things as measuring alpha and beta brain waves generated by Zen meditators. But beyond a few passing remarks that religion and God are beyond the scientific domain, and that there may be a psychic energy generated by prayer and meditation with which science has not as yet dealt (p. 188), there is little.

In the psychological area, there is more. Indeed, one of the author's main concerns is to "turn to dialogue between the great religions and their common dialogue with modern psychology and culture," rather than merely to "delve into the past of either Buddhism and Christianity" (p. 183)—though most examples of mystical experience herein are from the classical past. Modern people, the author believes, "are looking for a new spirituality and a new asceticism which will enable them to benefit from the good points of scientific progress, while at the same time developing and training those mystical faculties which lead to enlightenment" (p. 179).

There are, in this connection, some interesting and profitable suggestions. One's Jungian psychic depths (Freud is unmentioned) are what meditation and mysticism open up to creative use. And considerable is said about that nourishment of social and religious action provided by the so-called "inaction" and "passivity" of the periods of mystical contemplation. So, too, the author suggests that Ignatius' "examination of conscience" should be transmuted into an "examination of *consciousness*"—thus putting him in line with Jung and Carl Rogers (p. 162). He also properly warns that the psychologism of Transcendental Meditation and mere "one-pointedness" of mind *per se* involve no genuine religiousness. "One-pointedness looks very like mysticism. But do not be deceived. . . . One-pointedness can be achieved without any faith whatever. It can be practiced . . . to play ping-pong or golf" (p. 190). But having said such things, there is nothing more to add. There is little here beyond William James, who is in fact frequently quoted. All this seems but a mild attempt (without rocking the ecumenical boat) at observing that a set of Western psychological terms do indeed somewhat approach the meaning of mystical experience, East or West. Nor is there here any definite methodology of psy-

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chologically oriented and interpreted meditation suitable for personal development, such as has been developed at many centers, like Esalen.

The core of the book, however, is its announced purpose of bringing Buddhist and Christian mysticism face to face. And this has a special interest in view of the author's efforts in the Zen meditational area, and in view of similar "reconciling" attempts by others such as Father Enomiya-LaSalle and Thomas Merton. The former, perhaps too simply, is quoted frequently as saying that Zen meditation (which he practices and in which he trains young Catholic priests) is *only* a methodology and hence does not intrude into Catholic orthodoxy. Thomas Merton once wrote that Zen had no "message," i.e., no gospel or theology, but is simply a way of seeing into one's own being as a self. Does Johnston here say more, or other?

A confident answer to this question is made the more difficult by the author's shifting basis of comparison at some crucial points. For example, in dealing with intercession, the comparison is made with Gandhi, and not with Zen; and in the chapter on "Mysticism in Action" there is no substantial East-West comparison of any sort. Yet Zen-Christian correlations are frequent and to these we'll now turn.

In his *The Still Point* Johnston somewhere remarks that though a Christian meditator and a Zen meditator may sit side-by-side, one sits on a Christian cushion and the other on a Zen cushion. I do not know whether or not the two cushions were amalgamated in the author's *Christian Zen*, but here, I think, the two sittings are quite separate, though one ecumenical scarf is draped over both.

To be sure, there is the scarf. The language throughout is irenic and accommodative. There are many easy-gentle parallelisms drawn between Buddhist and Christian mysticism. For example, it is the author's verdict that human nature is basically good in the Christian view, just as in the Buddhist; man was made in "the image of God," and this Godlikeness was only "wounded," rather than corrupted by "original sin." This leads on to the assertion that "all of the great religions hold ultimately that man's basic nature is good" (p. 158). But, one must ask, is there *truly* no *real* difference between the Christian Holy Spirit being "at the core" of a man's (Christian man's only?) being, and the way in which Brahman is atman, and the Buddha-nature in every man?

In another example it is said that the techniques of Ignatius in his *Spiritual Exercises* in overcoming "inordinate attachments," present "an interesting parallel to Buddhism: detachment leading to enlightenment or conversion and salvation. For Ignatius this conversion entails the discovery of God's will" (p. 181). Again, are there no important differences between a "conversion" which leads to the embracing of a Personally directed plan for one's life, and a detachment which is the discovery of the Buddha's nature inherent in one's selfhood? Perhaps the use of the word "parallel" here is significant even for the author.

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Johnston, of course, would say in reply to such objections, that in the psychological-experiential dimension, theological distinctions are bypassed or transcended. And in part I agree. Yet, *can* an experience of "detachment" nourished while sitting upon a Christian pillow of personal communion with a Divine Spirit be genuinely equated or meaningfully compared with one which discovers the Void to be the glorious essence of all reality—available on the Zen pillow? Not easily I think. Nor does the author himself really believe so; for throughout the book he insists that *Christian* mysticism is intrinsically and inherently an experience of the Divine Trinity.

Other examples could be given, but these make my main points. First, there is no clear, consistent delineation either of the mystical experience as a distinguishable entity, or of Christian-Zen likeness and difference. Second, despite an obviously wide acquaintance with world religions, a genuinely ecumenical sympathy, and a deep religious awareness—as well as some personal experience of Zen-type meditation on the part of the author—there is in this book no *genuine* encounter between Buddhist and Christian mystical substance and experience, let alone a "reconciliation." The best that is produced is a series of perceptive insights and rough parallels, suitable for an introductory comparative mystical treatise. But there is no fundamental intersection of thought or interaction of religious essences.

And why is this the case? It is because the author has never had a truly existential encounter with Buddhism. He himself, in the core of his being, has always been and still is sitting *firmly* on his Christian pillow—though he has allowed his mind and imagination to journey interestedly and interestingly into the ways of inner Buddhist spirituality. And this points up a key question for all of us who, like him, have essayed to study-experience a religious way of life which is different from our own faith-accepted one: How genuine or veridical is *any* such experience, short of conversion to the "experienced" faith's ideas and values?

WINSTON L. KING

ABSOLUTES NICHTS: Zur Grundlegung des Dialogs zwischen Buddhismus und Christentum. By Hans Waldenfels. Freiburg, Herder-Verlag, 1976. 222 pp.

This publication, the result of many years of intensive work, is not only a study of Nishitani Keiji's religious philosophy, its Buddhist origins and essence, it deals also with the development of the so-called Kyoto school, whose outstanding exemplar his philosophy represents at the present time, and with the