

Tucker N. CALLAWAY. *Zen way—Jesus way*. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1976. 263 pages including glossary and index. US\$8.50, ¥1,650.

Zen Buddhism continues to fascinate students of religion and allure seekers of religious experience. Not the least of the reasons for its popularity is the opinion that Zen transcends cultic form and satisfies a human longing for immediacy with the ultimately real. A recent example of this interest in Zen is *Zen way—Jesus way* by Dr. Tucker N. Callaway, formerly professor of world religions and philosophy of religion at Seinan Gakuin in Fukuoka. During his twenty years in Japan, Zen was the principal object of his research and field work, and his brief but lucid book is at once an instructive, provocative introduction to Zen and an invitation to adherents of Zen to compare their religious experience with Callaway's presentation of Christian teachings.

The book has three major sections. The first is a systematic presentation of several Zen tenets. Here Callaway describes Zen on its own terms. He organizes his material around the Zen premise that mind alone exists and explicates the meaning of this premise through the introduction of technical terms and concepts such as the "eight consciousnesses" (Jps., *hasshiki*, Skt., *aṣṭa vijñānāni*) and the "stored-up consciousness" (Jps., *araya shiki*, Skt., *ālaya vijñāna*). He then clarifies the meaning of the derivative concepts of "the nonexistence and non-nonexistence of things" through a careful exposition of the *Hannya-shin-gyō* (Skt., *Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya-sūtra*) and the Oxherding Pictures.

The *Hannya-shin-gyō* is a sutra recited daily in Zen temples. Its

theme is, "Every particle of everything is empty" (p. 66), and in the compact style of Zen literature it declares through a variety of phrases the total emptiness of the skandha elements. Because of the importance of this sutra, Callaway gives a line by line translation of some key parts and provides the full Chinese text as well.

The Oxherding Pictures, a series of pastoral scenes symbolizing the progression from ignorance to enlightenment, have been reproduced by a number of Zen artists, but date back at least to the twelfth century. Poetic captions to the ten scenes describe the journey of one who not only proceeds to awareness of the non-existence of things but also achieves the other pole of Zen consciousness, realization of the non-nonexistence of things, in the light of which he enters upon the world-affirming dimension of the middle way of Zen. Here too Callaway's commentary is helpful. He successfully conveys to the reader an understanding of *satori* ("awakening") as sudden awareness of the nonexistence and non-nonexistence of all things in the fleeting but always present now of "only-mind."

Section two is impressionistic. Callaway has a novelist's eye for detail and nuance, and he captures in evocative words the sights, sounds, and especially the mood of Zen temples and gardens. As he relates his experiences in Zen temples and his conversations with unknown and well-known Zen personalities (including an interview with Suzuki Daisetz), he seeks to explain the basic character of Japanese Mahayana Buddhism, contrasting it with Theravada Buddhism. Both affirm the middle way, but Theravada Buddhism, fostering ascetic self-denial, is oriented to seeking an objective state of enlightenment. Mahayana Buddhism, on the other hand, denies all objectivity, including that attributed to enlightenment. It claims, moreover, that experience of the "emptiness, no-thingness" of the classical Buddhist concepts can and should be achieved not through ascetic withdrawal but through participation in society.

Callaway also makes the point that the various Japanese Mahayana sects, though superficially different, are actually very close to one another in aim and content. Their differences arise from the use of different modes of communication (*hōben* and *zokutai*) in order to explain their teachings. The desired goal, however, is in all cases the same. Thus Callaway concludes that while the Jōdo Shinshū, Kegon, Zen, and other sects seem different at first glance, in fact they "rest upon the same presuppositions" (p. 119), "embody the same concepts of Buddha-reality" (p. 119), and "are talking about

the same thing" (p. 127).

Section three is deeply personal. Here Callaway lays aside the detachment of the scholar, expressing his love and admiration of the Japanese and seeking person to person dialogue with the followers of Zen. His purpose is not to reconcile the differences between the Zen way and the Jesus way, but to guide adherents of both to a "clear grasp of the rock-bottom premises of the other's Way" (p. 161). If this can be achieved, the author suggests, dialogues will be characterized by mutual respect, and each party will be in a better position not only to compare and contrast his way with that of the other but also to gain new insights into the presuppositions of his own way.

Callaway then proceeds to contrast the two ways from philosophical, epistemological, ethical, experiential, and theological viewpoints. This leads him to draw two conclusions. The first is, "Zen works" (p. 227). By this he means that benefits such as "sheer, uninterrupted delight, freedom forevermore from tensions, struggles, the frustrations of failure, the aching load of responsibility, the agony of grief, the ache of guilt" (p. 227) are undeniably possible through Zen. Callaway himself claims to have tasted the experience of enlightenment. His second conclusion runs counter to prevailing opinion among most contemporary interpreters of religion. He forthrightly states that on the basis of his studies and experiences, the Zen way and the Jesus way are irreconcilable. Further, he calls for recognition of the fact that the difference between these religions is not merely a matter of vocabulary, but of "utterly contrary conceptions of the nature of reality" (p. 231). Acceptance of this view leads, he avers, not to intolerance, but to honest acknowledgment of differing religious solutions to the fundamental problems of human life.

This assertion of mutually exclusive and irreconcilable difference will obviously be the most controversial part of the book. One can doubtless challenge a number of his philosophical definitions and theological conclusions, but his thesis of an "unbridgeable gulf" (p. 157) cannot lightly be set aside.

Given the limited space at my disposal, it would be inappropriate to argue here for a position on this matter, but I would like to express three general criticisms.

First, in his opening pages Callaway says that a major objective of his book is "to expose the foolishness written about Zen by some

Western authors who have dabbled in it enough to learn some of its techniques and terminology, but have missed its essence" (p. 25). With this objective so forcefully stated, one would have thought that a major portion of the book would be devoted to naming these authors and presenting a critical analysis of their mistaken understanding of Zen. Regrettably, Callaway does not do this. Western writings of this description are neither identified nor refuted. Even acknowledged Zen experts like Dumoulin and Johnston are ignored both in the text and in the notes. (Alan Watts is mentioned, not as a writer whose representations of Zen call for evaluation, but as a person the author came across in Kyoto.) If Callaway assumed that his readers would already be conversant with several views of Zen and would therefore naturally notice where he differs from other authors, he was expecting too much. At this point the book fails to fulfill its purpose.

A second point of concern is the lack of a historical framework for section one. The definitions of key aspects of Zen are done very well indeed, but the section lacks a sense of historical development. As it now stands, the definitions given by Callaway almost seem to represent a fixed tradition of doctrine untouched by the forces of its own history. By the same token, though section two makes passing reference to the Sōtō school of Zen, it would have been greatly enhanced by a review of the contributions of Dōgen and Eisai to the development of Zen in Japan. Furthermore, a brief summary of the manifestations in Zen history of the tensions, struggles, and dialectical development of thought characteristic of the history of all religious groups would have given readers a better perspective on the material of this section.

My final criticism concerns Callaway's claim that the enlightenment experience is basically psychological and that he has on several occasions, within certain limits, achieved it. "I have touched the scent of a flower. I have heard the clap of one hand" (p. 212). One can, Callaway states, induce the psychological state that approximates the Zen experience of enlightenment by following certain disciplines and partially suspending one's critical faculties. He admits, however, that "to go the Zen Way seriously" (p. 228) would be for him an act of self-deception.

This raises the question: is the essence of Zen and all other forms of Buddhism psychological? Is this the essence, the nature, of religion? This point is critical, and Callaway would have to develop his theory

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of religion in more detail in order to make a convincing case. The question has a corollary (implying a position I can here only state, not defend): can enlightenment or the essence of any religion be experienced without a total commitment to its presuppositions? Ultimately, Zen can hardly represent a mere psychological state of self-induced bliss. It is either a discovery of ontological significance or a delusion of tragic proportions.

Herbert SKOGLUND
Baptist General Conference,
Japan Mission