

Rude Awakenings is an extremely valuable contribution to our understanding of Japanese political thought in the war period and its ongoing echoes today. It throws a harsh light on the ideological failure of the Kyoto School. But, as in the case of Heidegger, this should not lead us to devalue the abiding philosophical achievement of these thinkers, their synthesis of Mahayana spirituality with Western dialectics to create a new kind of thinking from the standpoint of emptiness or Absolute Nothingness. No thinker is above ideological suspicion, but neither can any critic claim the high moral ground of utter innocence. That there is a transmission of wisdom, despite the crookedness of history in which we are all involved, is the wager on which philosophical and religious tradition rests.

A Broader Vision: Perspectives on the Buddha and the Christ

Richard Henry Drummond
Virginia Beach, VA: A.R.E. Press, 1995.
xxii, 344pp. US\$16.95

*Reviewed by Joseph O'Leary,
Sophia University, Tokyo*

Professor Drummond's vision is "broader" in the sense of "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy." His seventeen years as a missionary in Japan have given him a wide ecumenical tolerance towards the preternatural or miraculous dimensions of religion. When he speaks of treating lightly subordinate critical issues in order "to delineate more clearly and emphatically the larger picture" (p. xi), what he means is the picture of a full-blooded supernatural universe, in which such phenomena as levitation, psychometry (p. 169), and miraculous creation of matter have their rightful place.

Well-versed in New Testament exegesis, versatile in argument, exuding moral and spiritual wholesomeness, Drummond subjects one's rationalistic prejudices to a severe buffeting. In contrast to exegetes who reduce the empirical facts of the resurrection to pneumatic events along the lines of Paul's conversion experience (cf. I Cor 15:5-8), he takes seriously "the combination of bilocation with tangibility and the eating of food" and seeks comparisons with other "out-of-the-body events" (p. 150). The miracles of Jesus, an obligatory accompaniment of prophetic claims, are paralleled by preternatural phenomena in the careers of such figures as St. Joseph of Cupertino, Padre Pio, Therese Neumann, and Sathya Sai Baba ("reported to have performed operations after having materialized the instruments," p. 275). The problem, however, is not to get people to admit that such events occur, but to convince them that they are significant and not merely embarrassing. Some theologians talk of outgrowing the huge concessions the Gospels make to popular religiosity, and point to gospel texts that tone down the significance of miracles.

The most controversial aspect of Drummond's work is the role he ascribes to psychics in the substantiation of Christian claims. Thus we learn of "supportive evidence from clairvoyant sources for the historic Christian belief in the virgin birth of Jesus" (p. 271) and of Rudolf Steiner's "clairvoyant perception of events of the life of Jesus and of their cosmic significance" (p. 169). Steiner taught that "the Buddha 'in sending down influences from the spiritual worlds' has been a cooperator with the risen Christ and from the beginning of the Christian movement has contributed and continues to contribute to the activity that we call Christian" (p. 178).

Drummond's publishers are devoted to spreading the teachings of Edgar Cayce (1877-1945), "the American Protestant seer best known for his phenomenally accurate

clairvoyant medical diagnoses and wide-ranging methodologies of healing" (p. 25). Katharina Emmerich (1774–1824), the stigmatist whose fantastical life of Jesus once enjoyed such a vogue, receives equal credence. Drummond airily refers to "methodologies quite other than those of academic historiography but still meaningful, if tested in turn by the methodologies of other disciplines in the context of religious faith" (p. 245). Common sense must insist that visions have no standing as sources of historical information, and Christian faith must reject the spooky and repellent atmosphere they generate when stretched beyond the value for piety they may once have had. I saw last summer that the site of the Blessed Virgin's house above Ephesus, identified on the strength of Emmerich's *Leben-Jesu Forschung*, is currently adorned with a saccharine poster inviting us to Jesus's 2000th birthday celebrations. Critical biblical scholarship has taught us to breathe a purer air. At one point I felt that Drummond had strayed into the world of Mrs. Nancy Reagan: "Are we not able to interpret also with religious meanings the prognostications of professional geologists regarding certain possible, not to say probable, events of this kind [cataclysms] within the North American continent?" (p. 171).

By seeking personalist traits in Buddhism and the law of karma in Christianity, Drummond brings the two religions closer. He sees the Buddhist doctrine of non-self as a later scholastic theory, not supported by the Buddha's own teaching (pp. 52-3, 180). He finds the expression "poised-of-self" in *Sutta-Nipata* 477; in contrast Saddhatissa translates: "He does not see himself in terms of the self; poised, upright, firm..." (*Yo attana attanam nanupassati; samahito...*). Drummond refers to *Majjhima-Nikaya* I, 138 in support of the statement: "Actually the self in the true sense and what belongs to it 'although actually existing are incomprehensible'; yet

the text as translated by Nanamoli merely insists that "since a self and what belongs to a self are not apprehended as true and established" views based on self and mine-ness are "utterly and completely foolish."

Drummond asks if "the Buddha thought of Dharma or Nirvana in personalist terms, comparable to the ascription of personal aspects to the Deity in the Judaeo-Christian tradition" and suggests that the Buddha would have regarded such a question as merely speculative (p. 56). He laments the absence of grace in early Buddhism: "A taking of initiative toward human beings is never ascribed by the Buddha in any of the early texts to either *Dharma* or *Nirvana*. Language precisely akin to Francis Thompson's "The Hound of Heaven" is not to be found in the early texts as descriptive of the activity of *Dharma* or *Nirvana*. But as I have suggested above, the Buddha comes close to such language" (p. 57). It seems to me misguided to speak of Dharma or Nirvana as "acting" or to see Dharma as the "dynamic manifestation" (p. 44) of Nirvana. A more careful reflection on the culture-bound, phenomenological, and relative status of all such religious terminologies could halt such desultory comparisons. Viewed in terms of a traditional Augustinian conception of original sin and grace, Buddhism appears cheerfully Pelagian or Semi-Pelagian. But if we think of grace more concretely as the creation of a space of freedom and as a communal event rather than an invisible interior medicine, then the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha may well be experienced as such enabling events.

The Buddhist law of karma, or "principle of compensation," prompts Drummond to see hell as a state of temporary punishment proportionate to the sin (p. 125) and the "kindness and severity of God as constituting two sides of the same coin (Rom 11:22), a principle far from the semi-magical notions of grace and faith with which the history of the Christian church in every major tradition

abounds" (pp. 133-4). This seems in tension with the Christian confession of undeserved grace and the forgiveness of sins. However, Drummond does point out that the atonement can overcome the otherwise inevitable law of karma (p. 166), by bringing about the objectively necessary "righting of wrong" on a cosmic scale; redemption can-

not be understood without this karmic background.

This book can be recommended as a courageous, intelligent and instructive effort to bring Christianity and Buddhism into a comprehensive, spiritually vibrant perspective.