

BOOK REVIEWS

Iida Shotaro, *Facets of Buddhism*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1991. pp. 166.

Today as we are witnessing humanity to a growing religious intolerance there is a dire need to make attempts to view religions from their respective world view. Dr. Iida, an eminent Japanese scholar in Buddhism and comparative religion, presents Buddhist world view in the ten essays he wrote over a span of twenty years. The presentation of the principles of prattiya-samutpada (dependent co-origination) found in the Buddhist scripture is remarkable and is a challenge to our world where the historical religions do not seem to cherish the idea of interdependence of the different faiths. Iida harps on the theme of dependent co-origination. Everything is produced interdependently and the entire world floats on this basis. There is no self sufficiency or independent entity. Buddhism presents itself as an unreligion-like-religion compared to the Semitic religions.

The author takes them the theme of visual mode in Buddhist tradition. He discusses different visualization practices. Meditation clears and concentrates the mind. Visualization puts an image in it which can profoundly affect the life. Vision is not simply a picture or image but rather it is accompanied by strong emotions and deep understanding. Mind can produce projections so real as to be indistinguishable from the objective objects. Iida tries to engage in a dialogue with interrelated areas of research.

The question on the role and equality of women in society more specially in the religious field is hotly discussed today at various levels. The role of women in Buddhist literature invites a lot of controversy among the scholars. Theoretically, the Buddha never denied the equality of the sexes on the path to enlightenment. It is in the Lotus Sutra that the theme of "attaining of the Buddhahood by the wicked and the women" is found.

The example of an eight year old daughter of the Dragon King Sagara gaining great wisdom and acclaimed to have become Bodhisattva provides matter for the discussion on the possibility of women being

enlightened. Suppression of femaleness and generating maleness is proposed even in this case. However the theme is well expounded in this article. Still a male chauvinistic tone found here will create lot of debate on the subject.

The longest essay in the book is on Buddhist Idealism reflected in the novel "Sea of fertility" by Mishima, a controversial Japanese writer. It presents the intricate Buddhist philosophy. Mishima himself calls this unique novel in Japanese literature as "a story of dream and transmigration." He introduces the central theme of Buddhist philosophy of dependent co-origination in the novel.

This book will serve as an introduction to the Buddhist world view. It provides also some insights into comparative religious study.

Pauline Drouin

A. Pushparajan, *From Conversion to Fellowship: The Hindu Christian Encounter in the Gandhian perspective*, Varanasi: St. Paul's Society, Allahabad, 1990, pp. 350 Rs. 95 (paper) Rs. 125 (Hard).

In the midst of Inter-religious conflicts, it is heartening to see that persons of many religions take keen interest in establishing dialogue with followers of other religions. However, for inter-religious dialogue to be fruitful, it is necessary not only to emphasise areas of agreement between the dialogue partners but also to analyse the points of differences among them.

The present book tries to consider three basic problems which arose in the encounter of Christianity with Hinduism: Image-worship, Conversion and Scriptures. The Problems are studied as they arose in the form of controversies between the Missionaries and the Hindu representatives like Rammohan Roy, Swami Dayananda Saraswathi and Mahatma Gandhi.

In the process of investigation the Gandhian approach to the problems is found to be superior to any other part of the controversies.

In the Gandhian way, then, the issues regarding nature of religious controversy, nature of religion, religious plurality are clarified, and the need of inter-religious dialogue as well as religious complementarity are established.

The book has a lot of theological bearing on disciplines like Comparative Religion. Besides, it demonstrates a more valid approach to tackle inter-religions problems. Above all, it establishes Gandhi as powerful illustration of such an approach.

Joseph Francis, *Backianadan Love: in the Life and Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1991.

Writings on Mahatma Gandhi, his life and works, are innumerable coming out. As they go deeper and wider, newer horizons are on the scene. "Love: in the Life and Works of Mahatma Gandhi" by Joseph Francis Backianadan takes the readers to an untrodden world of insights.

The love of God and the love of neighbour: are they identical? The question is to M.K. Gandhi! The normal answer to it is that we do not suppress either term through a strict identity but only speak of a close connection between the two, where one implies the other or one necessitates the other. Would Gandhi answer differently? The author has succeeded in making the reader ever enthusiastic as he goes on in search of an answer from Gandhi. The enunciation of the landmark incidents of India's freedom struggle which run parallel to the main stream of thought make the book worth reading. A careful study of the book will disturb the reader in the right sense, because the Gandhi that is found in this work, need not be and at times definitely not, 'the usually taught Gandhi' elsewhere.

The detailed study done on all the 88 volumes of the series—*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, which contains all his speeches, letters, articles etc. has made the work authentic. In citing them the author has noted in bracket the year to which a particular volume refers, so that the reader could perceive clearly the particularities and circumstances implied in the citing. In order to study the developments of certain concepts the author has also divided the life of M.K. Gandhi into four stages. The first stage leads up to the final return of Gandhi from S. Africa to India in 1915. The second stage ranges from the year of silence imposed by his political mentor G.K. Gokhale in 1915 upto the end of his self imposed political silence for one year during 1926. The third stage brings us to the time of his last

imprisonment in 1942. The final stage would be a brief coverage upto the time he was shot dead on January 30, 1948 by a Hindu fanatic, Nathuram Godse. Though this division has made it easier for a proper understanding on Gandhi, sometimes it seems to be ambiguous and can be questioned.

The final chapter, gives the reader ample opportunity for further reflections and study, which has made the work open-ended!

Johnson Vazhappilly

Elavathingal Sebastian, *Inculturation & Indian Art – An Indian Perspective*, Rome: Urbaniana University Press, 1990. pp. 342.

Here is a book on inculturation and christian art from an Indian perspective, which itself is a work of art and an attempt at inculturation. The cover page with a beautiful Indian icon of Infant Jesus, drawn by the author himself, makes it clear that this christian theologian is also an Indian artist.

Inculturation is comparatively a new word coined to express the complex reality of Church's being and becoming in the world. It is the creative encounter between the Word of God and the world of God, guided by the Spirit. Art and symbols have a vital role to play in any valid attempt at inculturation. The author in his work shows how, In artistic creativity, one can remain fully Indian and fully christian.

There is a growing interest in christian themes in modern Indian art among christian as well as non-christian artists. Christian artists adopting traditional Indian style to present christian themes confront the problem of communicating the Gospel. The question is whether they preach Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God, or some Indian *sādhu* in saffron. True Indian art must have not only Indian style but also Indian vision of reality.

The book begins with the theology of Image in christian tradition, highlighting the significance of art and symbolism in divine revelation and in human realization. This is followed by a well-documented

account of religious art in India starting from the pre-vedic times to the modern era. Basing on Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, the author affirms that the artistic remains of ancient India are expressions of intense religious experiences. But from the analysis of christian art in India, it is found that they often lacked what was characteristically Indian.

The author proceeds further to show quite successfully that in the modern era there are more serious attempts at inculturation. He analyses the significant contributions of Michael Amaladoss and Jyoti Sahi in building in a theology of creativity in the Indian context. Amaladoss as a musician and Jyoti Sahi as a painter have the advantage of experience in their respective arts. Amaladoss emphasizes the centrality of art in life and proposes a *bhakti* view of art, life and religion. Christian art, for him, cannot be limited to certain areas of life. It is the life of a christian, and all of it, that must find expression in art. Jyoti Sahi identifies his artistic vocation with his christian and human vocation. He makes his reflections on art and christian life in the socio-cultural and religious context of India. He establishes his theology of art on the essential human experience of joy. For him, the essence of art is joy and celebration which he identifies with the essence of the mission of Church. Mission is basically an expression of the spiritual fullness which the missionary experiences as freedom and joy. He proposes the *āśram* movement as an effective means of awakening a true Indian christian culture.

The author concludes with the observation that art is a necessary means of christian self-realization. Artistic and symbolic expressions are original experiences of inculturation. According to him, creative participation is the challenge before the Indian christian art today.

The book is very useful for any serious student of inculturation from an Indian perspective. It tries to regain the importance of art in christian theology and in spiritual life. Thus the book becomes an invaluable source of inspiration for an inculturated christian life, especially in India.

A. Wessels, *Images of Jesus. How Jesus is Perceived and Portrayed in Non-European Cultures* (translated from the original Dutch by J. Vriend), Grand Rapids, Michigan : William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990, pp ix + 195.

In this book Anton Wessels, professor of missions and evangelism at the Free University in Amsterdam makes an enlightening discussion on the different images of Jesus as found in some of the important Non-European cultures and religions, especially of Asia and Africa. After giving us a brief description of the changing images of Jesus in the European scene (Introduction), the author proceeds to deal with the ancient (Talmudic) and modern Jewish images of Jesus (ch. I), image of Jesus in the Koran and in the modern Islam (ch. II), the Latin American image of Christ as Liberator as reaction to the "Spanish Christ" (ch. III), the "Black Messiah" and other titles for Jesus in Africa (ch. IV), and the Asiatic faces of Christ (ch. V). In the concluding chapter he explains the relation between Jesus Christ and the various cultures and that between the various images of him and the New Testament.

We cannot evaluate the book for what others say about Jesus, but for what the author himself says and for what he does not say in that context. By presenting, or rather letting present the other cultures and religions their different images of Jesus Christ, he seems to point to today's two important theological concerns: inculturation and inter-religious dialogue. The book is a valuable contribution in these fields. The author favours the view of A. Pieris that the Asian Church has to be baptized in the Jordan of Asiatic religiosity and poverty—the true characteristics of the Asian scene (p. 166). The concluding section on the relation between the images of Jesus and the New Testament (pp. 169 ff) does not come up to the expectation. Instead of offering an evaluation of the various images of Jesus in the light of the NT, it turns out to be a superficial consideration of the different NT images of Christ and Christologies on the one hand, and a criticism, of course deserving, of certain forms of triumphalism in Christianity. Imperial or colonial Christology has to be definitely given up. But this does not mean that one has to deny the normativity of the NT.

Influenced by H.R. Weber's thought, the author speaks of a *factual* side and an *attributive* side for the NT understanding of Jesus (p. 170). This leads him to defend the validity of all the other images

of Jesus equally. There can have as many images of Jesus as there are cultures, religious and ideologies. But the NT and the Church's tradition retain the normative roles in evaluating them.

It is also not against the spirit of dialogue if one points out the inconsistency involved in certain positions. For example, the Jesus do not recognize Jesus as the Messiah but only as a brother in religion and a great moral teacher. The blame is put on the early church, especially on Paul and John, for making Jesus the Messiah and Son of God, which according to some Jewish authors were not claimed by Jesus himself. But does not the criticism that Jesus' ethical code was "extremist" and "one-sided" suited only "for the end of the world and the days of the messiah" (p. 29) itself a hint that Jesus had claimed at least indirectly to be the Messiah? If Jesus can be accepted as a man of integrity to be a moral teacher, his claims cannot be done away with as spurious. Further, the Jewish background of the Apostles and many of the early Christians makes it unintelligible that *they* made Jesus divine and Son of God. The early church's faith in Jesus' divinity has to go back and in fact does go back to Jesus himself, his claims and behaviour, which were validated and approved by God in raising him from the dead. Blaming Paul and John for the faith in Jesus as divine is too simplistic!

Every image we make of reality contains the risk or danger of being a betrayal rather than a portrayal. This may be the reason why God has forbidden man to make images (Ex. 20, 4). If at all there is a true image of God, it is not the image made by man, but revealed by God Himself in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4, 4; Col. 1, 15). The image which I have made of the book of Wessels has also its inherent limitations. More than that, the images of Jesus *made* by religions and cultures share the same lot. The authentic images of Jesus are those which he himself has manifested in his being and doing. This is accessible not to every one, but only to those to whom he has been revealed by the Father (Cf. Mt 16, 17; 11, 27).

The book is, nevertheless, to be recommended for study because of the useful information it contains which is not otherwise easily available. The wide range of details provides us with the basic lines of thought cutting across time and space, culture and religion on the mystery of Jesus' person and work.

Howard J. Van Till, Robert E. Snow, John H. Stek and Davis A. Young, *Portraits of Creation*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, pp. X + 283

We live in the an age of discoveries. Science surprises us with new inventions and with new theories day after day. The discoveries of science subjected to reason often contradict the understandings of the Biblical creation account and faith of the religion.

In response to the firestorm of controversy over different understandings of the Biblical and scientific perspectives on the world's formation, the authors of this book attempt to establish reliable guidelines that the evangelical Christian community can use in its efforts to determine what it is that the Bible and science are telling us about the physical universe and its origin.

This collaborative volume is also a help to solve the problem of the issues surrounding the Biblical doctrine of creation and its relationship to history and behaviour. Throughout the book the authors acknowledge the perceived tension between biblical and scientific cosmogonies, but they show in a number of ways that this tension is groundless, that there is nothing inherently contradictory between biblical and scientific accounts of creation. The authors incorporate both what they know by empirical study of the created world and what they know by exegetical study of scriptures.

The book, also examines and evaluates the 'scientific method' through which theories about the physical cosmes have been gained. And it articulates a stunning criticism of 'creation science.' Finally, a constructive comparison with the biblical account is proposed, offering a synthesis of the two 'approaches' in which each is given its due weight and significance. Few Volumes on this issue have achieved such a useful and exciting synthesis.

Joseph Chiramattel

Harold Coward (ed.), *Hindu-Christian Dialogue, Perspectives and Encounters*, (Faith Meets Faith Series), New York: Orbis Books, 1990, pp. xxi+281.

The Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll) has recently published through *Orbis Books* a series of books on themes

related to interreligious dialogue. This series has been rightly and aptly named *Faith Meets Faith Series*. The main objective of this series is: "To promote interreligious dialogue by providing an open forum for the exchanges between and among followers of different religious paths. While the series want to encourage creative and bold responses to the new questions of pluralism confronting religious persons today, it also recognizes the present plurality of perspectives concerning the methods and content of interreligious dialogue . . . Faith Meets Faith hopes to foster and focus the emerging encounter among the religions of the world."

Hindu-Christian Dialogue is an eminent work to promote and propagate interreligious dialogue, especially dialogue between and among the followers of Hinduism and Christianity. This volume contains eighteen essays by brilliant contemporary scholars, and is divided into three parts.

First part gives the *Historical Perspectives on Hindu-Christian Dialogue*. The six well-documented articles of this part deserve careful study. The analysis of Anand Amaladass of the 'dialogue between Hindus and the St. Thomas Christians,' John C.B. Webster's study on 'Gandhi and the Christians: Dialogue in the Nationalist Era,' etc. are specially interesting. Roland E. Miller depicts a vivid picture of the sustaining existential dialogue that exists between the three main religious traditions of Kerala, namely, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. In spite of some tensions and frictions in recent years, this religious harmony is still evident in Kerala.

The second part contains eight articles on the *Current Perspectives on Hindu-Christian Dialogue*. The first three articles by Richard W. Taylor, David J. Goa and Steven J. Gelberg depict the current Hindu-Christian Dialogue in India, Canada and America respectively. The last two articles of this part by Murray Rogers and Anantanand Rambachan describe the Hindu influences on Christian spiritual practice and the Christian influence on Hindu spiritual practice respectively. I found the essay of Rambachan from Trinidad especially interesting.

The third part has four essays on the *Future Perspectives on Hindu-Christian Dialogue*. The essays by S. Wesley Ariarajah and Kalus Klostermaier are particularly enlightening.

This book, as Raimundo Panikkar in its foreword states, 'provides a useful service by giving us a fair picture of the situation. . . A book of

this kind may help readers not only by furnishing them with information, but also by providing them an occasion for deepening human communication, enhancing their own lives.'

Two facts that struck me as I went through the contents of the book are worth mentioning here. Firstly, all the contributors of this volume, except one, are Christians. Secondly, all the contributors, except one or two, are non-Indians. I thought the book would have been richer and more comprehensive if it contained a few essays on relevant issues of interreligious dialogue by competent Indian Hindus.

Augustine Thottakara

Subash Ananda, *Major Hindu Festivals—A Christian Appreciation*, Bombay: St. Paul Publications, 1991, pp. 144, Rs. 32.00.

Subash Anand who has done scholarly study on Hinduism, has put together in this book the *Major Hindu Festivals*, precisely with the desire to enable the Christians to come closer to their Hindu brothers and sisters. The reader will notice that the author concludes every feast by trying to see that particular celebration in relation to the Christian faith. The feasts which are treated in this book have one feature in common: They are intimately associated with some myths. The author has not only made a serious effort to understand what his Hindu brothers and sisters believe, but also to re-narrate the myth in a way which the Christian readers may find more meaningful.

Raymond E. Brown, *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible*, Bombay: St. Paul Publications, 1991, pp. 146, Rs. 35.00

In his long career of lecturing on the Bible, Raymond Brown may have appeared before a thousand different audiences, and in the question-and-answer period that followed he may have responded to ten thousand queries. Over a period of time he noticed how the same questions repeated themselves. In this book he has chosen and adapted 101 of the most commonly-asked questions on the Bible. The questions cover a wide range of subjects: various translations of the Bible, reasons for reading the Bible, the inspiration and historicity of the Bible, miracles, resurrection of Jesus, the structure of the early Church,

the role of Peter and many more . . . Anyone who has read or reflected on the Bible will find questions here they have wanted to ask, along with the concise responses of a noted biblical scholar.

Francis Pereira, S.J., *Gripped by God in Christ: The Mind and Heart of St. Paul*, Bombay: St. Paul Publications, 1990, pp. 160, Rs. 35.00

Of all the New Testament writers, it is perhaps Paul alone who very relevantly and in clear terms brings home to us what it means to be a Christian or disciple of Christ. Paul's encounter and personal experience was with the glorified Christ and not with Jesus in his earthly life. Our Christian experience also is concerned with the same risen Lord. However, this great disciple and apostolate of Christ, for whom to live was Christ, and who could genuinely say: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me," was the archpersecutor of Christians before he was gripped by God in the person of Christ on the road to Damascus. A man who was most dedicated to the meticulous observance of the Jewish Law and the Traditions of the Elders, became the most ardent disciple and zealous apostle of Christ. So zealous was he in his preaching of "Christ and him crucified," that he went about his mission single-mindedly "always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies." It is this Christ-centered personality of Paul, that impelled the author to know more in depth so that this study would lead him and many others to know Christ more deeply and personally, thus to live more meaningful Christian lives bringing effectively the message of love to our fellow human beings in today's world.

In order to make the book readable and within the grasp of the general reader with basic biblical background, the author has avoided unnecessary technicalities and scholarly disputes or opinions on minor issues of Pauline theology. However, the present work is not just a pious book for spiritual reading. It will demand attentive and interested reading, since the themes dealt with and the theological conclusions arrived at are based on scientific exegesis, though adapted to the requirements of the common reader.

Y. Masih, *A Comparative Study of Religions*, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass 1990, pp xiv + 400. Rs. 200.00

A Comparative Study of Religions is written by a scholar who has engaged himself with the subject over 50 years. It gives a lucid and

revealing explanation of the great religions of the world followed by a comparative study. He is truly unbiased in his approach.

In the first chapter of the book the author gives a detailed exposition of the nature and function of the study of various religions. He says, "A comparative study of the religions teaches us to cultivate the virtue of appreciation and appropriation of the different insights of different religions." In the same chapter he further emphasises, "The most important task of comparative study of religions is to find out a principle of unity which will harmonize and balance the claims and counter claims of warring religions into one unity. Unity does not mean uniformity of religious conduct and belief, but a harmonious blending of religious variety and symphony of spiritual striving and quest." With this aim in mind, the author proceeds to the rest of the book.

One chapter is specially dedicated to the comparative study of the key-concepts of religions. Here the author gives special attention to the Indian views regarding these concepts. He also makes conceptual comparisons, but keeping in mind the difference between popular religions and Indian religions.

The book definitely is a unique work in the field of comparative studies. The author's aim, namely, establishing harmony between religions will be accomplished when this book reaches the hands of persons who are truly devoted to this study. The last chapter "Encounter of Religions" appears almost like a normative section solely for this purpose. He quotes Ramakrishna, "All religions and all paths call upon their followers to pray, to one and the same God. Therefore, one should not show disrespect to any religion or religious opinion."

David Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other: The Inter-religious Dialogue*, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990, pp. xii + 124, \$ 12.45

"Dialogue with the Other" is a revised and expanded version of five lectures delivered by David Tracy at the University of Leuven. It is in the form of a series of explorations of aspects of a crucial issue which will transform all Christian theology in the long run: the inter-religious

dialogue. These essays raise distinct but related issues for that dialogue. In the first essay the issue is that of modernity and post-modernity and the relevance of classical "prophetic" and "mystical" models for both religious and secular discussions. The second essay addresses the question of general criteria for inter-religious dialogue in its philosophical side. The last three essays are more explicitly theological. The third essay provides a theological reading of the significance of the work of the great historian of religions, Mircea Eliade, on the archaic traditions. The fourth essay shows the Buddhist-Christian dialogue from a Christian theological perspective. And the final essay shows the more strictly theological utility of the prophetic-mystical paradigm. As explorations, I am sure these essays will help other theologians and philosophers to test the model of dialogue for hermeneutics and the mystical-prophetic model for theology.

The author states in the preface to the book, "I believe that we are fast approaching the day when it will not be possible to attempt a Christian systematic theology except in serious conversation with the other ways." He hopes that some explorations of basic hermeneutical terms like "dialogue" and theological models like "prophetic-mystical" will be of some help in the process. He is optimistic to state that inter-religious dialogues make one radically rethink one's own heritage and belief to which one naturally clings to as though that has the monopoly over all the others-however forgetting the fact that truth is no one's monopoly.

Anyone who is involved in pastoral ministry will certainly profit from this book as it presents some of the best reflections on current theology and pastoral ministry.

Mari Tom

Gordon Spykman, Lance Grahn, Guillermo Cook, Sidney Rooy, Michel Dodson, John Stam, *Let My People Live: Faith and Struggle in Central America*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988, pp. 271.

The book *Let My People Live* is the story of the 'zero-moment of Central America; it describe the history, story of the oppressed

Central American people's struggle for freedom, justice and equality. The few under the guise of saving the country from an imminent marxist takeover, torture the poor, harass and kill the leaders of the movements which are questioning the oppression. In their fight against the oppressive regime christianity gives moral courage and mental support and a few move to the extreme of an armed struggle.

The book begins with the description of the transformation of a soft spoken, mild mannered parish priest Oscar Romero to a megalith, becoming the backbone, symbol and hope of the Elsalvadorean people's struggle who spit fire against the oppressive government whose members are also christians. He is the pastoral exemplar of the noblest aspirations and the bitterst sorrows of the people in Central America. Being panicked when the power brokers are challenged, the military junta in Elsalvadore decided to eliminate the Archbishop from the face of the earth. The dead Archbishop, through his prophetic witness resurrects the trembling hope of their struggle and becomes a colossal figure in the people's fight for justice not only in Central America but all over the world.

The Mayans and Incas, the original inhabitants of Central America were having a highly cultured civilization. But when the colonisers came they europeanized them and as a means of subjugation they were resettled in new villages and their whole system was revamped. The changes of traditional pattern of land distribution, social system confused and mortgagued the future of these people. The military junta quiet often used the war mechine to suppress any revolt in the guise of marxian influence. The developmental strategies of the United States applied in these countries were miserably failed because it did not suit to their context. Chaos and anarchy prevailed in the pretext of democracy.

Solace and help to landless poor came from the church. They organised villagers as basic christian communities which becomes the back bone of a new society. But the military junta mercilessly terrorized them and harass the leaders of these communities and quite often physicaly eliminated them. The book gives a number of such brutal killings. The central core of the study can be summarized in the following lines. The Central American people place, their hope in the Bible and they see a fusion of horizons. They find the message of the Bible immensely relevant to their situation. To them it is like

reason and ideas recollected in tranquility. Therefore, the spiritual classics like John of the Cross's "Ascent of Mount Carmel" which expresses the intimate feelings of the union and separation from God as well as sensuous classics like that of Omar Khayamm's *Rubiyat* which asks everyman to enjoy his life fully were framed in the form of poetry. *Sudha*, a compilation of the poems of Chalam is a continuation in this great tradition. It is the poetic recollections of a revolutionary who rises from a passionate sensuous promiscuous life to the siren heights of mysticism. The book contains 108 poems of Chalam compiled and translated by the collective effort of four authors guided and led by his own daughter Sowris Pramoda who herself is a mystic and poet in her own account. The early part of the book are laden with the musk of the past, quite visible by the symbols, flowing from the period of his sensuous life. As the glory of Arunachala brightens up, he is awakened and sublimated to the Ultimate, shedding away the blasphemous past, yet keeping the revolutionary spirit. *Sudha* chronicles his spiritual quest.

His evolution from darkness to light, from *tamas* to *gyoti* is the central theme of this compilation. He invites us to awaken as the light in Arunachala is rising. It is a call for spiritual awakening. Arunachala is the symbolic expression of the Ultimate. But people crawl to darkness avoiding the bright light and they crucified the messengers of the light. Instead men sought after worldly powers and he reminds us that these are like fuel to fire just waning away glories. Then he narrates his spiritual agony, the lust calling him back to the past life and Arunachala reckoning him to the new spiritual order. He makes a leap into the infinite abyss calling the name of Siva. In this light, in this abyss he searches for his identity, "who am I?" With a negative answer "I am not" he relates his identity with the Infinite Nothingness, the Infinite Bliss, the Void within and everywhere. Thus he comes to the conclusion that thou and me are one and the same-an advaitic concept. But his advaita has the bearings of his social philosophy that the differentiation of you and me is an illusion and we are one. The knower and the known are one and the same. World, passions, love and joy, are illusions of the mind. "The knowing mind, the known world and the revealing God are one" and the same. In elucidating this central philosophy he also deals with the problems of fate, death, and time and calls them as the great levellers. The revolutionary in him also criticises the structures of

the society which inflicts pain and suffering on the down trodden on the pretext of fate.

This collection reveals the spiritual quest of the author who ponders over the perennial questions and finds his bliss and solace in Nothingness where the knower, known and the revealing God are integrated into One. He invites everybody to follow him and especially the womanhood who are oppressed and persecuted and for whose liberation he had burned out his life. He expresses the anguish of the soul in uniting with the divine leaving behind all the tensions, tribulations and passions of the world. Through this summation the translators help the humanity to encounter this revolutionary ascetic who plundered his life to ponder over the ultimate questions. It also beckons humanity to turn towards the *Sat*, to reach the *satyasya Satyam* where one finds himself and his neighbour one and the same and all differences are seen as illusion of the mind. In evaluating the book philosophically it is to be noted that the author's notion of Void or Nothingness is very confusing to the readers. We are not sure of his concept of the Ultimate whether it is *Saguna* or *Nirguna* Brhama of Sankara or the *Sunya* of Buddhism. Ramana, Arunachala, Siva as Dakshnamurthi all comes into play in the culmination of his philosophical discussion which may be felt as a departure from the sequence of thought and ends abruptly without clarifying the sudden imposition of these dieties. When these thoughts are transferred from the cultural milieu of one language to another the viscosity and beauty of the language is drained off to which the authors agree. The charm and richness of the powerful thought of the original is not conveyed in the translation. Thus Sudha seems to fall into a mediocre quality in English poetry. For this lowering of the quality, one can not blame the translators. This is not a flop of this book alone but a universal failure. It seems that the symbols he uses do not come up to a luminous quality; often it is laden with the sensuous past.

Mathew C Teekoy

Sujata Soni, *Evolution of Stupas in Burma; Pagan Period: 11th to 13th Centuries, A.D.*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1991, pp. 113+71 pages of plates.

Architecture is an index of every Nation's spirituality, philosophy, wealth, social structure and culture. In christianity the Gothic and the Byzantine are different styles depending on the culture. The minarets of the muslim architecture proclaim its visible identity. The Hindu temples also have a uniqueness in its architecture. A study about the style and architecture can shed a lot of light into the culture and other aspects of the civilization. The book entitled the Evolution of Stupas in Burma in the Pagan Period is a deep study in this respect. The author delves deep into the theme and emerges with erudite pearls of truths about architecture and style of Stupas in Burma (Now called Myanmar) along with history and philosophy of Buddhism which are interrelated. A comparative study in the different architectural styles prevalent in the Asian continent reveals its cultural uniqueness and interrelatedness.

This work was prepared by Sujata Soni as the thesis for Master of Arts Degree in the University of Mandalay in 1969. The book contains five chapters, with few maps locating the Pagodas and its architectural style and its influence on the neighbouring countries. 138 photographs depict the architectural beauty and the variety of the stupas. In the first chapter which has a philosophical tint, analyses the reasons behind the construction of the stupas. The discussion of the evolutionary process of the stupas starts with the Indian influence and culminates in a form special to the genius of Burma. The Rhwedagum Pagoda in Rangoon is the end product and coronation of different architectural phases. The theme of the architectural development of the *ce ti* in the Pagan period is a study elucidating the work's originality. The comparative study of contemporary religious architecture is praiseworthy. It joins together the different cultural bonds of the continent and can lead to a cultural reawakening. Though the book is more of a scholarly nature even a layman can read it with enthusiasm. This work is an asset in the field of Buddhist studies and Comparative Architecture.

Antonio R. Gualtieri, *Conscience and Coercion; Ahmadi Muslims and Orthodoxy in Pakistan*, Montreal: Guernica Publications, 1989, pp. 126

The annals of world history reveals that persecution, oppression, maltreatment and denial of justice are inflicted upon people on account of their religious belief, moral conduct and ethical ideas. Nations and people announced crusades and jihad and waged war for years in the name of religion. In the known history of the world there are incidents like the execution of the nephew of Aristotle for not adoring emperor Alexander as God. Aristotle who was the master of the emperor wanted to correct Alexander and hence wrote a letter to him criticising such actions and emperor responded to Aristotle with a heavy indictment that he is almighty and can kill anybody at his will even philosophers. During the first centuries of the christian era, christians were massacred and thrown to the ferocious starving wild animals who punched their teeth into the innocent victims and drenched the arena with the blood of the christians while the cheering Roman spectators stood in an ecstasy of glee. When christianity spread all over the world and as it dug deep into the power structure, reformers and dissidents were put down heavily and mercilessly. Religious dissidents were cross examined in the inquisition courts and the guilty were burned at stakes. Modern mind condemn all these as barbaric. Yet in the recent past jews suffered as holocausts for ethnic purity. The history of Islam too follow the same route. Al' Hallage an Islamic reformer and mystic who claimed analhaq (one with God) was executed by chopping of his limbs. Eventhough man progressed through the centuries, the barbaric tendencies of harassment and oppression in the name of religion are still prevailing in the different parts of the world. *Conscience and coercion* is a vivid account of the sufferings of the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan. The author Antonio R. Gualtieri is the professor of religion in the university of Carleton. His intention in writing this book is to inform the world about the trauma of the community of Ahmadiyyas and to create international pressure so that a change of attitude may happen in Pakistan. The book starts with an edict of the Zia regime which inflicts penalties and imprisonment for the adherents of this faith.

The historical evolution of the Ahmadiis, their doctrinal variation from the orthodox doctrines, the structural organization of the movement, their missionary formation and the harassment and persecution they

suffer for their faith are well established in the present work. As an appendix an interview with the international head of the Ahamadiyya community is also included. He intuitively understands the political clout behind the oppression of the Ahamadis under the Zia regime. He travelled the length and breadth of Pakistan and collected numerous instances of physical, mental, sociological, spiritual and cultural oppression. He dares to give also instances of brutal killing of the Ahamadi community members. It is to be made clear that through the narration of numerous instances of oppression the author is successful in manipulating the mind of the reader to take a sympathetic attitude towards the suffering Ahamadis. Thus he is able to achieve his aim of creating world opinion against the oppressive system. But nevertheless the book remains subjective since it did not consult the so called oppressive Government and thus the readers are denied of the knowledge of the reason of the accused party. The author could have included the clarifications, views and opinions of the oppressors, which would help the reader to draw his own objective conclusions from the data. But on the other hand the book is built upon the premise that there is oppression on account of one's own religious belief. The book also serves as a good introduction to the Ahamadi movement.

Mathew C Teekoy

G.H. Anderson, J.M. Philips, R.C. Coote (ed.), *Mission in the Nineteen 90s*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991, pp. 80

This book is a collection of essays by seventeen eminent international mission leaders representing eleven countries, five continents and the major Christian traditions. These essays were first published as articles in the International Bulletin of Missionary Research during 1989 and 1990, and now they are published together in a book form in the order they appeared in the bulletin.

These seventeen authors seem to represent the very rich diversity of the Church in its efforts to be faithful to the Gospel of Christ. What comes through these articles is the diversity of their perceptions and perspectives based on the geographical, political, social and cultural milieu they are situated in. Naturally, they disagree on certain aspects of the essential task of the Christian Mission. Some hold the very

traditional view of mission as aiming at conversion and Baptism whereas some others view mission as an effort to effect a qualitative change in the life of man whatever be his religion, region and culture. In countries like India with their multireligious and multiethnic contexts disrespect and disregard for the religious and cultural feelings of the people amounts to be unchristian. Fr. Michael Amaladoss in his article "The Church as Servant of the Coming Kingdom" exposes this view. This calls for an attitude of interior silence which enables one to go beyond one's own situation and to be open to God's revelation in persons and situations other than one's own and the humility not to make any exclusive claim to revelation and truth. Thus the articles published in this book help us to broaden our vision of mission and focus attention on the current status and strategy of Christian world mission. Besides the issue of religious pluralism, other themes as secularisation, the preferential option for the poor, liberation theology, the modern Pentecostal-Charismatic movements, and recent developments in East Europe are discussed in this book.

Additional features of this book are the unique global statistical table prepared by encyclopedist Davis B. Barrett and a selected bibliography of 175 books on the theme "Christian Mission and Religious Pluralism" and a list of the 150 outstanding books for mission studies published during the 1980s.

Pius Areepalackal