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Review Of "An Introduction To Buddhist Psychology" By P. DeSilva

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Padmasiri de Silva, *An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1979. Pp. 134. \$22.50.

Padmasiri de Silva, Head of the Department of Philosophy and Psychology at the University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya, was trained in Buddhist philosophy under the late K. N. Jayatilleke in Sri Lanka, and in western philosophy and psychology at the University of Hawaii. Because his earlier books, e.g. *Buddhist and Freudian Psychology* (1973), appeared in Sri Lanka, his work has been relatively unknown among western students of religion. With the publication of *An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology* and his recent Fulbright professorship at the University of Pittsburgh, his contributions to the interstices of western psychology and Buddhist thought will become deservedly more widely known in the United States.

Earlier studies in the field of Theravāda Buddhist psychology have been essentially descriptive, e.g., C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Psychology* (1914), and primarily expositions of the more scholastic categories in the *Abhidhamma* or "advanced philosophy," e.g., W. F. Jayasuriya, *The Psychology and Philosophy of Buddhism* (1963), and Herbert Guenther, *The Philosophy and Psychology in the Abhidhamma* (1957). *An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology* represents—to my knowledge—the first attempt on the part of an Asian Theravāda Buddhist to interpret Buddhist psychology not only on its own terms but in the light of western theories of personality, motivation, emotion, and cognition. This statement does not mean that de Silva's primary referents are these categories, even though he organizes the core of his exposition around them (Chapters 2-4). Rather, what distinguishes his analysis and makes it so appropriate for the western audience is its consistent reference to the Pāli texts, especially the discourses or *Suttas*. He takes the reader into the world of the text, not merely particular Pāli terms, e.g., fear (*bhaya*), discursive reasoning (*vitakka*), but also the framework of the *Suttas*. Within this context his analysis then incorporates the more traditional Theravāda exposition of Pāli terms and western psychological categories. While neither Buddhologists nor technically trained western psychologists may be particularly pleased with this approach, in this reviewer's opinion, de Silva's methodology allows him to interpret the Theravāda context (i.e., the *Suttas*) in terms intelligible to an informed but non-specialized audience.

As well as an introduction to Buddhist psychology, therefore, the book represents one of the better recent attempts at cross-cultural communication between Theravāda Buddhism and western thought. The two greatest pitfalls in this enterprise are mere translation, on the one hand, and interpretative distortion on the other. De Silva's effort should be applauded for walking a "middle way" with a fair degree of success.

De Silva also manages reasonably well in handling another scholarly problem when writing for a more general audience, namely, the balance between the specific and the general, the technical and the commonplace—in short, how to be significant without being pedantic and comprehensive without being banal. The author's balance may, indeed, reflect his Theravāda commitment to the interdependent nature of things (*paṭicca samuppāda*), but in the context of his study it takes this interpretation: "The psychology of Buddhism is related to other parts of the doctrine. The basic aspects of the philosophy of early Buddhism . . . fall into . . . theory of knowledge, ethics, theory of society and theory of reality. While the material relating to the psychology of consciousness and behavior may be isolated for purposes of study its distinctive quality has to be grasped in relation to other facets of the doctrine" (p. 2). Hurrah! Certainly, highly specialized research projects make their own kind of contribution to religious and cross-cultural studies, but even they do well to heed de Silva's claim.

Specifically, *An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology* is a systematization and interpretation of the psychological enquiries in early Buddhism. It takes as its base the key terms of Theravāda reality theory, i.e., impermanence (*anicca*), egolessness (*anattā*), and interdependence (*paṭicca samuppāda*); the four aspects of mind—feeling (*vedanā*), disposition and volition (*saṅkhāra*), perception (*saññā*), and consciousness (*viññāna*); and the "therapeutic" nature of the Buddha's message. With these perspectives clearly laid out, de Silva then discusses Buddhist psychology in terms of the familiar categories of motivation, emotion, personality, and cognition. His exposition of these topics is clear and logical, informed by his studies of western psychology, especially Freud and humanistic psychology, but

uncluttered by a particular interpretative bias. De Silva's own perspective, implicit throughout and spelled out in the concluding chapter comparing western and Buddhist psychology as therapeutic systems, argues for the unique contribution of Buddhist psychology to a western understanding of personality and the nature of therapy. De Silva makes no startling claims—e.g., the ego is a root of anxiety; therapy should aim at more than mere adjustment to social realities—but his discussion will be appreciated by students of Theravāda thought for its clarity of exposition, its intelligibility of interpretation, and the scope of its intention. One hopes the publisher will publish a more reasonably priced edition than the \$22.50 hardcover!

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Carlo Caldarola, *Christianity: The Japanese Way*. Monographs and Theoretical Studies in Sociology and Anthropology in Honour of Nels Anderson 15. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979. Pp. 234.

This is an informative study of two small but highly significant groups of contemporary Japanese Christians: the *Mukyokai*, non-church Christians, and the *Makuya*, tabernacle Christians. Carlo Caldarola, a sociologist of religion, focuses on these groups because they are especially instructive to anyone interested in the "acculturation process"—the process by which cultures in continuous, direct contact modify each other. The *Mukyokai* and the *Makuya* have arisen "totally independent of western influence." From the beginning, they kept themselves resolutely apart from institutional, missionary-sponsored Christianity and stayed close to the indigenous spirituality of the Japanese people—a union of aboriginal Japanese, Buddhist, and Confucian elements which Caldarola calls the "Shinto way." To this Shinto spirituality, the *Mukyokai* added the "puritan" elements of Christianity: loyalty, honesty, and personal austerity, which they discerned in Jesus, Paul, Augustine, Luther, and Kierkegaard, and in their own leader and founder, Uchimura Kanzo. They synthesized the Shinto and Christian elements and created a "spontaneous form of Christianity."

Caldarola labels this synthesizing process "Integration." It differs greatly from the other, more common modes of acculturation. In "Alienation," the indigenous people move away from their own culture without accepting the new culture. They become rootless. In "Reorientation," the indigenous people partly abandon their own culture and partly accept the new. They are suspended between cultures. In "Reaffirmation," the indigenous people borrow certain parts of the alien culture to revive and perpetuate their own. They do not really accept the new culture. Caldarola considers Integration important not only because it is one of the basic forms of acculturation but because it is creative. In Integration, essential elements of both cultures are selected and synthesized to produce something which "did not exist in either culture prior to" the cultural interaction.

Although the author, qua sociologist, is properly concerned with the dynamics of acculturation and is careful and clear in setting forth the categorical scheme by which the dynamics are to be studied, he puts most of his energy into describing the *Mukyokai* movement itself. In this book, the author seems more interested in the *Mukyokai* than in Integration, more concerned to advocate (indirectly, of course) than to analyze—his protestations to the contrary notwithstanding. I, for one, am glad that Caldarola has neglected Integration itself and gone to such lengths to show us its value. Scholarship probably has not suffered, since Integration and the other modes have no doubt been analyzed extensively elsewhere. I am glad that he has written this detailed and sensitive study of the *Mukyokai* and for his forbearing to tell us more than we want to know about the less interesting and less important *Makuya*.

Occasionally, alas, the writing slips into the hazy verbosity of sociological jargon. What, really, does it mean to say that "Japanese churchless Christianity, when considered as a feedback effect within the general context of the dynamics of the acculturative process, adds an oriental flavor to the existential branch of Christianity"? Altogether, though, I think that Caldarola has written a splendid study, and I intend to use my copy often.

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