

Labrie's book does an excellent job of demonstrating the many changes in Berrigan's career. Because, however, Berrigan has published so much, been involved in so many activities as peace protester, etc., Labrie's groundbreaking analysis leaves room for more detailed examination. Especially the poetry and the autobiographical writing of Berrigan might be more intensely focused upon. When that is done in the future, it may be that Berrigan will be understood to have been radically successful as priest-artist within a predominantly non-religious culture.

BUDDHIST EMPTINESS & CHRISTIAN TRINITY

Edited by Roger Corless & Paul F. Knitter
 New York: Paulist Press, 1990
 109 pages — \$8.95 paperback

Chwen Jiuan A. Lee & Thomas G. Hand

A TASTE OF WATER:

Christianity through Taoist-Buddhist Eyes

New York: Paulist Press, 1990
 224 pages — \$9.95 paperback

Reviewed by **Bonnie B. Thurston**

The Merton Annual is an appropriate place to review works on the dialogue between Christianity and Eastern religions because the subject was important to Merton. Indeed, he may be best remembered in academic circles for his contributions to the early stages of the Buddhist-Christian dialogue. *Zen and the Birds of Appetite* and some of the essays in *Mystics and Zen Masters* were seminal and are now classic works in the field.

The two works for consideration, *Buddhist Emptiness and Christian Trinity*, edited by Roger Corless and Paul F. Knitter, and *A Taste of Water* by Chwen Jiuan A. Lee and Thomas G. Hand, approach the dialogue from the scholarly and experiential perspectives respectively. These two approaches were both employed by Merton, and in the present case present a balanced and interesting view to the reader concerned about comparative religious

dialogue and/ or spirituality.

The volume edited by Corless and Knitter is scholarly in tone and methodology. The essays collected were originally papers presented at a Christian-Buddhist dialogue conference in Hawaii in January, 1984. Each addresses Christian trinity and Buddhist *shunyata*, and a response to each is provided. The quality of the essays is uneven. The most successful is Masao Abe's "Kenosis and Emptiness" with a response by Hans Kung. The most problematic is Michael von Bruck's discussion of the "emerging holistic paradigm," an analysis shared by the respondent, Paul O. Ingram. The most adventuresome methodologically is Roger Gregory-Tashi Corless' "Can Emptiness Will?" to which Durwood Foster responds.

The essays have in common reference to the Trinitarian notions of *perichoresis* and to the "new physics" of David Bohm. As one who attended the 1984 meeting and who has been active in the dialogue thereafter, I was struck by how much our methodological sophistication has grown in the past six years. While the average reader may have trouble with the scholarly abstractions of all but Corless' essay, he or she will be led along some very provocative intellectual and spiritual paths. The journey will be difficult, but the vistas rewarding.

A Taste of Water: Christianity through Taoist-Buddhist Eyes would, I think, be more to Merton's taste because its springboard is existential. Lee and Hand's book is less circumscribed by the theoretical (though they do not shy away from it) and more concerned with lived reality than the Corless/ Knitter collection. Their approach is to follow the development of the religious sensibility (or to present an analysis of religious consciousness) in order to "lay the groundwork for a new paradigm of the Christian philosophy of life" (p. 67).

The reader will enjoy the developmental structure of the book, the sharing of personal experience, and the liberal use of religious texts from the traditions discussed. He or she may, as I was, be less enthusiastic about the heavy reliance on the evolutionary model of Ken Wilbur which dominates chapters 6 and 9. This model led to what for me as a Biblical scholar were some a-historical renderings of Christian scripture. Some readers may also be troubled by the suggestion that God is not "a person." The premise of the book, that Christian spirituality can benefit from Eastern insight, is sound. This Western Christian was profoundly challenged by the volume and its scholarly and practical implications.

Both volumes are important contributions to inter-religious dialogue. Both are well worth a careful reading. The openminded reader will

be challenged by and benefit from both books, although the non-specialist may find the Lee/ Hand volume easier going.