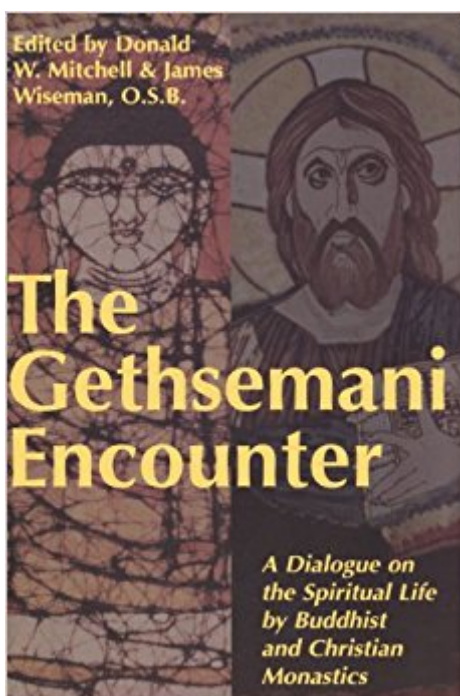


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Gethsemani Encounter: A Dialogue On The Spiritual Life By Buddhist And Christian Monastics



Synopsis

In July 1996, an historic five-day meeting of Buddhist and Christian monks and nuns occurred at the Abbey of Gethsemani, the retreat of Thomas Merton. The book offers 25 presentations on aspects of spirituality by leading Buddhist and Christian practitioners, including the Dalai Lama. The subjects range from ultimate reality and spirituality to prayer and meditation, and community and spiritual guidance, along with highlights of the actual dialogue itself. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

In July 1996, Buddhist and Christian monks met at the Abbey of Gethsemani, Kentucky, and held a five-day conference to discuss aspects of their spirituality and worship. Donald W. Mitchell (philosophy, Purdue) and James Wiseman, (O.S.B., chair of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue) have done a masterful job of distilling from this conference a remarkably rich document, encompassing vast areas of Christian/Buddhist monastic concerns. Part 1 offers presentations on ultimate reality and spirituality, prayer and meditation, spiritual growth and development, community and spiritual guidance. Part 2, the real treasure, contains dialog between Buddhist and Christian monks, including the Dalai Lama, on subjects from mind and virtue to grace, the nature of tragedy and violence, and the importance of social action. This book is directed more toward the scholar in comparative religions, but any informed lay reader will also greatly gain from reading it. Recommended for all libraries, especially academic ones. ?Glenn Masuchika, Chaminade Univ. Lib.,

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"Gatherings of spiritual practitioners from different backgrounds, such as the Gethsemani Encounter, are of immense value. It is my hope that readers of this book may find in it the inspiration and understanding that in some way contribute to their own inner peace." His Holiness the Dalai Lama "A remarkably rich document, encompassing vast areas of Christian/Buddhist monastic concerns. Part 1 offers presentations on ultimate reality and spirituality, prayer and meditation, community and spiritual guidance. Part 2, the real treasure, contains dialogue between Buddhist and Christian monks, including the Dalai Lama, on subjects from mind and virtue to grace, the nature of tragedy and violence, and the importance of social action." — Library Journal

The Gethsemani Encounter was perhaps one of the great overlooked religious moments in the past decade. In the hills of Kentucky, in the oldest Trappist monastery in the United States, monastics from all over the world gathered to dialogue, to learn, to agree and disagree. The meeting place was suggested by the Dalai Lama, who in a moving afterword says "And so for the rest of my life, the impact of meeting him will remain until my last breath." The other is Thomas Merton, who met with the Dalai Lama on his final journey through the east in 1968. The talks in this book are broken up into sections with speakers from both Buddhist and Christian monastic tradition sharing their experience and strength. Some of the participants are truly moving: Ven. Maha Ghosananda of Cambodia speaking briefly on THE HUMAN FAMILY, the Dalai Lama on THE BODHISATTVA AND SOCIETY, PRAYER AS PATH by Pierre-francios de bethune, Mary Margaret Funk, OSB on Lectio DIVINA, and many more. An over used term, treasure trove is quite appropriate. This is a collection to return to, to glean, to nurture the soul. To Open This volume is to enter a holy place. Truly magnificent.

I love this dialog between two forms of "monastic" practice.

this book is ground-breaking, a dialogue between buddhist thought of various different types with some of the most wonderful christians on this planet. this dialogue was engineered by the christian monastic order of the Trappists to enrichen their own faith and understanding through a deeper understanding of buddhist practice and thought. it was also held to facilitate love and understanding between these two religions. in this book, buddhist thought is clearly presented, though christian

thought and experience not quite so clearly, but still some of the beauty of christian monastic life and worship comes out in these pages. the buddhist heritage is the self or buddha 'nature', this comes out clearly in these pages. the buddha nature I call the supernature or indestructible image or kingdom of god within us . everyone has this... it is the power inherent within everyone to attain or realise anything. the supernature does not require one to be a buddhist, hindu, christian, atheist or whatever one comes up with. inherent within us all "the kingdom of God is within you". we all have within us the power or gentleness to become anything. this is the greatest gift of buddhism and hinduism and jesus. that our self contains all we need in order to evolve beyond even the angels. jesus said that this indestructible image is within all of us, he said that "the kingdom of god is within you". this kingdom is like the smallest of all seeds, but if planted in good soil, watered and given sunlight it will slowly but surely grow into the mightiest of trees. this growth is sometimes described by buddhists as a gradual clearing away of dust from a mirror. we gradually purify our own seeing of our true selves, that we are made in the image of god. defilements fall off, one becomes purer, kinder and more loving. and what is the kingdom/image of god? the image of god is the true love that is sown in our hearts. "be ye perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect." (jesus). we are called to become blameless. there is not much said about the power of evil to derail ones practice. we as christians should appreciate the potential within us for good, but not forget that there are dark/evil forces in this life and within us that will seek to twist ones path, and that ultimately in the face of these, prayer and Gods protection will be a tremendous support. the goal of using our supernature is to become what we should be... "to go and sin no more" this possibility is within each and every one of us, even a blade of grass. to become like job "a perfect man", change is possible. when we think of the kingdom of god within us, or the true-nature or whatever you want to call it, it is not something big out there, it is closer to us than our own heart. the image of god within us. we access our supernature through things such as concentration, prayer, the vows, deeds of kindness and worship of true love. anyone can become a god, or buddha and will hopefully go beyond such labels and terms through this goodness within them. we as christians do well to realise that everything of value found in buddhism and hinduism is found in the teachings of christ. jesus in johns gospel quotes "i have called ye gods"... now it is time to realise this truth. not only to aspire to be gods but to become godly, god like. free of greed, selfishness, wanton cruelty etc etc. excercise the 'super-nature'/image of god within you. we should not only rely on the forgiving grace of jesus, but also should aspire to become like jesus. jesus died for the wicked and evil... yes, but it is his desire that we should become like him, with no longer need for forgiveness, but personal perfection in our hearts and lives. we should not only rely on jesus's redemptive virtue, but also be prepared to

redeem ourselves. we have the power to redeem ourselves within us. we need purity of heart, purity of mind and purity of action. this is only possible with true love and deep down this is within all of us. seek the truth and you will find it, seek it within you and you will find it within you. this is the gift of true love to all. may sweetness and kindness be upon all who read this article. with all my love, snow-flake. xxx

The Gethsemani Encounter was a week-long meeting of 25 Christian and 25 Buddhist monastics who are mature practitioners and teachers of spirituality. The book includes talks given by representatives of different traditions on different aspects of the spiritual life and discussions on many issues including anger, love, humility, practice, suffering, sacrifice, social action, and women's issues. I have noticed that my own encounter with Buddhism (mostly through meditation retreats) has deepened my understanding of Christianity. Many of those participating in this dialogue noted a deepening of their own tradition as a result. Reading about this dialogue can be itself such an encounter.

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