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The Editor-in-Chief wishes to express thanks to Roger Jackson and Rena Crispin for their assistance in the production of this issue.

Two Ways of Perfection: Buddhist and Christian, by Shanta Ratnayaka. Colombo, Sri Lanka: Lake House Publishers, 1978. 180 pp.

In 1873 Theravada Buddhist monks and Christian ministers met in a series of great public debates at Panadura, Ceylon. These debates—won by the Buddhists, according to most observers—set in motion a process of dialogue between these two traditions. The present volume can be said to mark the latest development resulting from this process of dialogue and is a significant work in many respects. The author, Shanta Ratnayaka, is a former Theravada monk, who, at the urging of his teachers and superiors in the Sangha, came to America to pursue graduate study in comparative religions. In this book, the fruition of his graduate study, Dr. Ratnayaka develops a comparison of Theravada Buddhism and Christianity based upon the motif of the “Way of Perfection” in each tradition, and in carrying out this task, he provides valuable insights into his own Theravada tradition.

The book divides into three parts. Part One surveys the “Way of Perfection” set out in Buddhaghosa’s *Visuddhimagga*, Part Two explores the notion of “Perfection” or “Sanctification” in the Protestant Christianity of John Wesley, and Part Three provides a direct comparison of these two similar, but different, systems of “Perfection.” Parts One and Three are likely to be of most interest to readers of this journal, but Part Two may constitute the most noteworthy section because here we have a scholarly attempt by a Theravadin to comprehend thoroughly the concepts and intention of Christianity.

In Part One, the author explains the seven stages of purification (*visuddhi*) that constitute the essence of the *Visuddhimagga*. He shows that the path of purification is a gradual process wherein one begins with the latent “wisdom-seed” in oneself and progresses toward the supramundane stage of knowledge and wisdom. Summarizing and elucidating the meanings of these seven stages, Ratnayaka clarifies Buddhaghosa’s exposition in much the same way that Buddhaghosa clarified the commentarial tradition. Among the most important insights into the Theravada tradition given here are the author’s explanation of the relation between the concentration (*samādhi*) path to wisdom and the insight (*sati*) path, and his detailed analysis of the seventeen facets of “mentality” or a “thought moment.” Both of these issues have intrigued Western scholars who will appreciate the clarity the author brings to these subjects in particular, and to the technical, abhidhammic psychology of meditation in general.

Part Three of the book not only constitutes a good comparison of the Buddhism of Buddhaghosa and the Christianity of Wesley, but also

represents a model for Buddhist-Christian dialogue. Having given detailed and accurate descriptions of each tradition, the author impartially compares the major ideas of the two traditions with no attempt to advocate the superiority of his own tradition. The comparison of the two traditions is effective because it focuses upon one specific representative from each tradition. Too often in Buddhist-Christian dialogue the two traditions have been seen as monoliths rather than as cumulative traditions having multiple and varied perspectives. When interpreters have failed to recognize the pluralism within the tradition, they usually have ended up comparing sophisticated understandings of their own tradition with caricatures of the other tradition, while missing significant points of commonality in various schools or figures of the two traditions.

By taking Buddhaghosa and Wesley the author is able to compare both the overall intention of their religious systems and the specific elements within the systems. He finds some important similarities, for example, in the way they understood the human predicament and in their belief that the way to perfection represented the solution to the predicament. But he is also able to show that significant differences become manifest when we examine their understandings of concepts like faith and wisdom. So that in the end we must see that "The Ways of Perfection they offer seem to be two different Ways which lead to two different Goals."

This book would be important even if it were only an explanation of the Theravadin understanding of the *Visuddhimagga*. But because it is that as well as a solid comparison of the *Visuddhimagga*'s viewpoint with a major Christian viewpoint, it is doubly important. Readers with varying interests in Buddhist studies, as well as in Comparative Religions, will find this book useful.

George Bond

An Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems, tr. F.D. Lessing and A. Wayman. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978.

We have, with the recent republication of *Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*, the second edition of a very worthwhile work at a much more affordable price. The original publication of the work by Mouton and Co. in 1960 was a welcome addition to the all-too-small corpus of literature in the field of the Buddhist Tantras, and this second edition, recently brought out by the Indological publishing firm of Motilal Banarsidass and Co., has all of the advantages of the original 1960 publication.