

Buddhism and Mysticism.

It is said, amongst those appreciative of the arts, that every culture makes its contribution, and Buddhism, as the second oldest of the five major world-class religions, has much to offer, not only in terms of experience and agreeable individualism.



For those mystics ever in search of a sense of a unifying whole of life and experience, it gives a chance to appreciate 'what is' with a quiet and positive sense of humour, aside from the oft promised *tabula-rasa* and the point of the inner game.

As regards modern scientific truth, the Four Noble Truths of life reflect, in a surprisingly canny way, those dynamic factors of ecology found in all situations that human beings have to face, even if the environment as "a-locational cave" simply means "cessation of suffering" to many - and a more enlightened view of religion can only claim to offer a broad basis of rationale, nothing more in terms of direct proof.

Both elite Christian esoteric mystics and Buddhists of the various schools and denominations confirm that suffering, or in more general terms, *friction*, or *decay* towards entropy exists as a factor in every situation, although the journey finds representation in different ways, and the older religion isn't only a negative demolition trip.

Adding meditation, art and culture to the much stated modern requirement for eco-praxis, the mystic is usually defined as a self-realised one who seeks to experience the essential truths of whole-design, more often, it is true, as artist than with anything in the way of daily disciplin' or with any precise philosophical or scientific set of definitions. Buddhism gives the element of formal state-ability if only because certain avatars, noble enlightened beings, have always taught basic truths and means by which the "immaculate insight" and, with enough tolerance and acceptance by the team of monks and associated devotees, clarity and wholeness of experience can emerge from chaos. In literal terms, the awakened one then finds he is supported by antiquated mythologies which can later be shed like a shell or chrysalis when the "Tathagata" the "thus-come" or self-realised one finally appears as example to all subsequent devotees entering the path of training.

Naturally, this is all embellishment to the paradoxically attentive hell-raising websurfer, bent on getting his next 'techno-fix' and winged sandals, and time-out, the opportunity for meditation and review, is more likely to be considered as a luxury or privilege to a wayfarer who has passed the young adult stage, with memories of constraint to youthful energies and insufficiently referenced early schooling. The way of the modern mystic is likely to be an amalgamation of practices put together because the benefits of an enhanced free-ranging intelligence are more or less the *sine qua non* in the contemporary game. The New Age devotee of 2005 and counting can consider herself educated when she has read up on the numerous gurus, teachers, therapists and trainers who act as supplementary guides for the modern lifestyle (possibly as extra

subjects to study on a I.T./multidisciplinary or management course, i.e. not limited to the basic means to freedom from the world of illusions, *vipassana* and *samatha* meditation, as taught by Gautama Buddha 2½ thousand years ago). It may seem surprising that, along with the more



advanced teachings on sublime states of meditation, and conduct amidst conflicts of belief and facades, Buddha (previously known to some as prince Siddhartha, to others as merely a wandering yogi) said that life is change, and that any suffering is really only a consequence - those who want to sample the philosophical qualities of advanced knowledge of the many sutras and commentaries (e.g. Abhidhamma) can still take a sober and not so aethereal college course on those matters. Religion, whether or not the dynamic rhetoric of

creative action brings the 'beautified devotee(s)' to attain a subjective experience of mystical oneness with Godhead, is then seen to be about an ongoing teaching cycle that spans more time than two, or even three generations. Trad Hinyanists speak of crossing the river.

The venerable teachers of today, despite the bustle and need to deliver Hi-Fi..s, etc, are able to convey a culturally transcendent message in contemporary terms: "build your own way with diligence"; "a single point has no qualities whereby it can be grasped". Beyond the ordinary opportunity to create, and interact with compassion, the astute and successful mystic makes little progress without skill in means - and a stolen diary of electronics parts means very little to a differently trained IT student, or a TV presenter, so asceticism emerges as time-honored basic-know-how. Asceticism is not only the way of the monk, one who pursues the holy life and aesthetically-defined sacred mysteries. Some degree of asceticism is the means to maturity and skill in such diverse occupations as banking, doctoring and professional skiing; when we learn about the environment and good household management, the attitude in practice needs to be just that bit ascetic in order to maintain an integrated system while appreciating perfections, imperfections and good healthy living.

...So, if the next-door neighbour, who happens to be a Buddhist with mystic aspirations does not seem all that extroverted on the subjects of world politics and religion, he or she probably has his or her own way of contributing to problem-solving with a modern outlook.



A Few General References:

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