

Japanese invasion until the country was overrun by the Communists. Now in South Korea that faith is beginning to bear fruit. Converts are coming to the Church in hundreds and thousands, and the only difficulty is to cope with the numbers. The reason for these conversions is always the same: the tragic experience of life under Communism, the sense that so much suffering cannot be without meaning, the discovery that the Catholic faith can alone give a meaning to this experience.

It would be foolish to think that Korea is typical of the Far East as a whole (though Mr Hyde shows that an almost exactly similar situation is to be found in Hongkong), and in Korea itself there are present all the other factors which go to make up the complex eastern world of today, the universal spread of materialism, which goes with western civilization, the breakdown of traditional morality brought by contact with the 'Christian' west, the poverty and indescribable suffering resulting from the recent war. Everywhere the pattern is the same. But by studying it closely in one isolated area and showing the strength of the Christian reaction there, Mr Hyde has been able to show where the real answer lies. It is something which gives tremendous encouragement, but at the same time there is the constantly expressed fear that this wonderful opportunity will be lost, because there are not sufficient men in the missions to do the work which is required. 'Pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest . . .'

BEDE GRIFFITHS, O.S.B.

THE SUPREME DOCTRINE. By Hubert Benoit, with an Introduction by Aldous Huxley. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 25s.)

This work by a French psychoanalyst aims at setting forth the Supreme Doctrine of Zen Buddhism, the method of attaining *satori*, a state of mind in which a man may live his life delivered into perfect freedom and buoyancy by the given awareness that he is the supreme Buddha, and that in him 'the one is united with the All'. To prepare the personality for the crisis, the 'explosion' of *satori*, which appears to strike from outside, a complete detachment is necessary, not only from the senses, the questions, human relationships, and the incessant colour film of the imagination, but also from 'the intellect fertile in restlessness', reason, thought, all that makes a human being more—or less—than a capacity for spiritual sensation in equilibrium; 'a water drop in shadow of a thorn, clear, tranquil, beautiful. . . '

There are of course many parallels to this search after a state of mind to be found in the writings of Catholic contemplatives who followed the negative way to the Presence of God, as an especial vocation which did not deny the validity of other ways. Odd echoes resound in this dark cave, not only of St John of the Cross, who is quoted by name, but

also of Dom John Chapman and of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, whose advice to seek God as 'that which thou canst not think' is as an acceptance akin to Dr Benoit's rejection of 'the word God' if it is meant to indicate 'Reality as conceivable to our minds'. Sometimes, indeed, there are moments when Dr Benoit's differences from the West seem to consist only in the fact that he regards words not as pointers towards realities, but as things in themselves; witness his passionate denial of 'a personal' or 'an anthropomorphically conceived' 'God', a denial which is compatible with a recognition of 'the tireless and friendly Principle which unceasingly creates me on its own initiative'. It would be interesting to know whether such moments flash from a mind rooted in the culture of the West, or whether they appear in Zen Buddhism as lived by the bonzes themselves, the masters who reply to a question 'with a phrase that is disconcerting, or by a silence, or by repeating the question, or by blows with a stick'.

RENÉE HAYNES

BUDDHIST MEDITATION. By Edward Conze. (Allen and Unwin; 12s. 6d.)

'After the rejection of all conditioned things, "Emptiness" becomes the "proper pasture of holy men". It may surprise the worldling to learn that an inexhaustible variety of interest lurks in this subject of emptiness.' (p. 36.) Nevertheless, because it is the unconditioning condition of one who is truly awake, it has a positive implication which cannot but be its essence. This positive is "That which is hard to see" (Samyutta Nikaya, quoted p. 108).

Buddhism of its nature unites doctrine and method. Dr Conze's book expounds method, following the canon and the post-canonical literature of the Theravadins. Buddhaghosa's *Path of Purity* supplies much of the text, the extracts being newly translated for the purpose. The result is a very useful and lucid book which gives every reason to think that its compiler knows what he is doing.

'Only a few of the more elementary exercises can be carried out in conjunction with other duties. The remainder is reserved for professionals, and requires the total retirement of a monastic life.' (p. 40.) For this reason, no doubt, rather more explanatory space in proportion to the difficulty of the subject matter is given to the Recollection of Death, the Distaste for the Body and the Cultivation of Friendliness than to other considerations deeper and harder to grasp. 'The upper ranges of the virtues of mindfulness, concentration and wisdom demand a reformation of the conduct of life which is greater than almost any layman is willing to undertake.' (p. 39.) The book provides us with a means of understanding something of their acquirement by a contem-